

THE
MILITARY OPERATIONS
AT
C A B U L,

WHICH ENDED IN THE
RETREAT AND DESTRUCTION OF THE BRITISH ARMY,
JANUARY 1842.

WITH A JOURNAL OF
IMPRISONMENT IN AFGHANISTAN.

BY LIEUT. VINCENT EYRE,
BENGAL ARTILLERY,
LATE DEPUTY COMMISSARY OF ORDNANCE AT CABUL.

FIFTH EDITION.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

TO

MAJOR-GENERAL W. S. WHISH, C.B.

LATE COMMANDANT OF THE BENGAL ARTILLERY,

This Work is dedicated,

AS A SLIGHT MARK OF ESTEEM FOR HIS PUBLIC AND

PRIVATE WORTH,

AND OF GRATITUDE FOR PAST KINDNESSES,

BY

HIS SINCERE FRIEND,

VINCENT EYRE.



NOTICE BY THE EDITOR

TO

THE FOURTH EDITION.

IN sending to the press a fourth and more complete edition of this work, I have only to regret that it cannot yet have the benefit of the Author's personal revision. In the impossibility of communicating with him, I have confined myself to the correction of trifling inaccuracies; and to the addition of that new original matter, which lately reached my hands, and which has also been published separately for the purchasers of the three first editions.

The communication by Capt. Mackenzie (referred to in pp. 25. and 44.), which was not originally forthcoming, will now be found in its place; and I have taken upon me to add to the Appendix Lieut. Crawford's account of the imprisonment of himself and his brother-officers at Ghuznee. They were eventually transferred to Mahomed Akber, and released with the prisoners of Cabul. I should have hesitated thus to appropriate what is so deserving of separate publication, but that, as it has appeared in an Indian

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paper, it seems not to have been destined for another shape; in which case, its adoption here may afford many friends of those officers a gratification, which they might not otherwise obtain.

The other additions to the Appendix, and the few notes, are such only as have been considered strictly illustrative of the Journal. They might even have been usefully increased, but for an unwillingness to swell the work with matter not original. Among these the despatch of Major-Gen. Elphinstone, and some extracts from a memorandum of that officer, deserve attention.

The interest attached to the events, which are the subject of this narrative, has drawn to it much attention, and, of course, some criticism. The author has, on the whole, very much to gratify him in the result of such an ordeal but there have been a few qualifications of the general praise, which, with this opportunity, should perhaps be noticed.

On the question which has arisen, whether the particulars narrated have been allowed publicity *too soon*, there may be a far difference of opinion. For this, as has been before stated, the author is not strictly answerable; but I may be allowed also to say that I consulted, and had the sanction of high military judgment on the point; and I knew besides that the MS. had, *in transitu*,

been seen by individuals of professional discretion and experience, none of whom suggested that it should be, even for a time, withheld. The only doubt I ever entertained had respect to its publication in *India*, pending "the Inquiry." This, however, was to open soon after Christmas, at *Ferozepore*, whither no copy of the book can arrive *before* the middle of April. The danger, then, of "prejudicing the Inquiry" is but small.

"But," say a few, "is it nothing to prejudice the minds of those at home? The minds of those at home had been, in *reality*, prejudiced, as much as could be done, many months ago. Every one at all interested in these events *was possessed* of the outline, which Mr. Eyre's history fills up; and both the responsible personages and their acts had been long since dealt with by those at home, in an *undiscriminating* spirit of condemnation, which his work tends rather to correct. An erroneous analogy, as I think, is resorted to, when "those at home" are likened to a *court* or a *jury*, or the *author* to "a *jurymen* prematurely delivering his verdict." He cannot be more than a *witness*; and those at home will carefully compare his testimony with that of others, and with the issue. If he be correct, no one is injured; if not, it can only recoil upon himself; but to state at *any* time what he knows, though he may have to give it after-

wards in evidence, is *no* offence in a witness, either morally or judicially, while to suppose of the *real* court and jury, who must investigate the disasters of Cabul, looking at the constitution of such a court, that their decision could be influenced by this history, is quite impossible. It is, however, very satisfactory to those who have given it to the world, to see how every day proves more and more, as the real truth creeps out, that, had not Lieut Eyre been restrained by a spirit admitted by a distinguished reviewer to be, "under the circumstances, indeed extraordinary, he *might* have revealed much more, which he has had the good taste and feeling to withhold." It is further satisfactory to see already so many of his statements confirmed, as are so, both by the Papers just presented to Parliament, and from private sources, among these may be particularised the Journal of the Retreat, by Capt Johnson, another of the prisoners, which has appeared in the Bombay Times. I should, too, in justice to my brother, state that, on finding that his MS had been sent to me, he hastened to request that, as it had been "written under every sort of disadvantage," I would not hesitate to omit any passage which might by

* See particularly a letter from Benares, in the N. & M. Gazette of 14th Nov.

possibility give pain to others. This letter arrived too late for the first edition ; but, though I *had* myself kept this in view, it was quite impracticable to omit all that *any party* might wish omitted ; nor would it have been fair, either to the public or the author, so to mutilate a work of so much historic interest. In scenes too, in which *all* the actors *cannot* be blameless, blame will often *appear* to be imputed by the most meagre recital of what was done or left undone ; and so the case is here ; the bare facts are the severest part of all ; but they are such facts as, with the public characters whom they implicate, have ever been the legitimate subjects both of history and criticism ; and the idea, that silence for any time was incumbent on any actor in them, is as new to me, as the circumstances are, happily, new and unprecedented in British annals.

One apology, which is found for Lieut. Eyre's "partiality and prejudice," his *friends* must needs deny him — the suggestion that he writes under the influence of "frustrated hopes and blighted prospects." These terms in no way apply to him. He is in the same service as before ; and nothing that occurred at Cabul can have *diminished*, at any rate, his professional hopes and prospects.

In the brief remarks which I have to add, I

shall confine myself to the few instances in which Lieut Eyre's *veracity*, or *consistency*, is called in question. The following critique appears to me unfair.* "Asserting his correctness, the author tells us—'In these notes I have been careful to state only what I know to be undeniable facts. I have set down nothing on *mere hearsay evidence*, nor any thing which cannot be attested by living witnesses, or by existing documentary evidence.' Yet, in the face of this declaration, he acknowledges hearsay evidence (certainly of eminent men), from Major Pottinger, Capts Mackenzie, Lawrence, and Troup, and, after his departure from the retreating army as a prisoner, describes all the motions and casualties of the force with as much minuteness, as if he had continued to be an eye-witness." This is surely an unusual apprehension of what is *mere hearsay evidence*—information, which he acknowledges as "valuable aid," given by some of the "living witnesses," expressly for historical purposes. Again, —among these living witnesses were some, his fellow prisoners, captured *towards the end* of the retreat, Major Griffiths, Capts Johnson and Bygrave, &c — How can particulars supplied by them be termed "*mere hearsay evidence*"?

On one other point the author's consistency

* Literary Gazette

has been impugned, with no more reason, as I humbly think. — Discrediting the existence of a *conspiracy* throughout Affghanistan and at Cabul against the British, the *Edinburgh Review* considers that Mr. Eyre on this point *contradicts himself*. Now, first, as to the conspiracy:— the reviewer does not account in any other way for the *simultaneous* risings against, and massacres of, our men and officers in widely distant provinces. At Cabul, Charekar, and Ghuznee, no two of which are less than 90 miles from each other, the flame burst forth at the same time; and, on the 2d of November, Sir A. Burnes was murdered, the Ghorka regiment assailed, and shortly annihilated, Capt. Woodburn and his escort cut off, and Ghuznee surrounded. The reviewer does not dispose of the warnings of Major Pottinger, nor *attempt* to get over that of Taj-Mahomed, nor notice (he may not have seen it) the concurrent testimony of Mohun Lall.* This individual, to whom we owe so much, says, “In *October* last, the chiefs entered into the solemn agreement with each other, and thus the Eastern Giljyes stood up against our arms.” But *he* also agrees with Lieutenant Eyre, in saying that the outbreak at Cabul *commenced* by an attack of an insignificant force on Sir A. Burnes’s

* See his letter, App. E.

house, commenced, not originated. "Yet," observes Mohun Lall, "not a battalioh was sent to our protection"—Mr Eyre terms the same commencement "an insignificant ebullition, which military energy and promptitude ought to have crushed in the bud,"—that is to say,—the train being laid, a spark set fire to it, which spark might and ought to have been trodden upon at once. These statements are surely reconcilable.—Another alleged inconsistency is the following. "In the whole Affghan nation," it is said in one place, "we could not reckon on a single friend," in another place, that some chiefs, especially the *Kuzzilbashes*, "remained neutral, until our want of energy, and the booty of the commissariat fort, determined them to join in the general combination to drive us from the country." "This," observes the reviewer, "proves that the other passage is idle talk, we had friends in plenty." Now the friendship of these friends is thus illustrated by Mohun Lall — "Notwithstanding the Giljye, Caboolce, Kohistanee, and the Persian (*Kuzzilbash*) chiefs made solemn oaths with us,—wrote the agreement on the Holy Koran to take our cause,—received abundant money from us,—but every body cheated us like devils. Khān Sherceen, the Persian chief, promised to give every assistance, which he never did," &c. These *Kuzzilbashes*, then, were scarcely friends who could be

“reckoned on;” — they may have been the *best*, and better than *none*, in our distress: but, both in our reverses and our late prosperity, they have verified the poet’s comment on the friendship of the world: —

“Donec cris felix, multos numerabis amicos;
Tempora si fuerint nubila, solus cris.”

Lieut. Eyre is consistent enough, but he does not mean *Affghan* friendship.

Having attempted in these few observations to show that he has not been either inconsiderate or inconsistent, I have lastly to *admit* that on two or three points he must have been misinformed. They personally concern a distinguished individual, who himself liberally allows that such slight inaccuracies are quite reconcilable with a “desire to state the truth, and nothing but the truth.”

Having corrected them in former editions, as far as was practicable, by a note hastily annexed, and having also circulated the more accurate version with that supplementary issue, which is most likely to be in request with earlier purchasers, I have considered myself justified in *withdrawing* the statements referred to — unimportant in themselves, and not occupying six lines — from this Edition.

E. EYRE.

Athenæum Club,
14th March 1843.

NOTICE BY THE EDITOR

TO

THE FIRST EDITION

THE original manuscript of this Journal was sent by Lieutenant Lyre in parts, as it was finished, and as opportunity offered, to a military friend in India. Even when the last part reached his hands, the eventual liberation of the Cabul prisoners was a matter of painful uncertainty, and his judgment prompted him to transmit it entire, and without comment, to the Author's immediate relations in this country. There is a point connected with its publication *now*, which must not be thought to have been disregarded from any anxiety that this account should be the first. — it is, the question whether it should have been withheld until the result of the inquiry now pending in India should be known. It is considered that sufficient delay has been already incurred to insure this end, and that all such investigations will have been closed before a copy of this book can find its way to India. The Journal is therefore at once printed as it came, in concurrence with the writer's own idea that it cannot fail to interest the British public.

E LYRE.

Athenæum Club,
Dec 29 1842

PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR.

THE following notes were penned to relieve the monotony of an Affghan prison, while yet the events which they record continued fresh in my memory. I now give them publicity in the belief that the information which they contain on the dreadful scenes lately enacted in Affghanistan, though clothed in a homely garb, will scarcely fail to be acceptable to many of my countrymen, both in India and England, who may be ignorant of the chief particulars. The time, from the 2d November, 1841, on which day the sudden popular outbreak at Cabul took place, to the 13th January, 1842, which witnessed the annihilation of the last small remnant of our unhappy force at Gundamuk, was one continued tragedy. The massacre of Sir Alexander Burnes and his associates, — the loss of our commissariat fort, — the defeat

of our troops under Brigadier Shelton at Beyma-roo,—the treacherous assassination of Sir William Macnaghten, our envoy and minister,—and lastly, the disastrous retreat and utter destruction of a force consisting of 5000 fighting-men and upwards of 12,000 camp-followers,—are events which will assuredly rouse the British Lion from his repose, and excite an indignant spirit of inquiry in every breast. Men will not be satisfied, in this case, with a bare statement of the facts, but they will doubtless require to be made acquainted with the causes which brought about such awful effects. We have lost six entire regiments of infantry, three companies of sappers, a troop of European horse artillery, half the mountain train battery, nearly a whole regiment of regular cavalry, and four squadrons of irregular horse, besides a well-stocked magazine, which *alone*, taking into consideration the cost of transport up to Cabul, may be estimated at nearly a million sterling. From first to last, more than 100 British officers have fallen—their names will be found in the Appendix. I glance but slightly at the *political* events of this period, not having

been one of the initiated; and I do not pretend to enter into *minute* particulars with regard to even our *military* transactions, more especially those not immediately connected with the sad catastrophe which it has been my ill-fortune to witness, and whereof I now endeavour to portray the leading features. In these notes I have been careful to state only what I know to be undeniable facts. I have set down nothing on mere hearsay evidence, nor any thing which cannot be attested by living witnesses, or by existing documentary evidence. In treating of matters which occurred under my personal observation, it has been difficult to avoid *altogether* the occasional expression of my own individual opinion: but I hope it will be found that I have made no observations bearing hard on men or measures, that are either uncalled for, or will not stand the test of future investigation. To Major Pottinger, C. B., the well-known hero of Herat, whose subsequent acts have amply sustained the fame which he there acquired, I am much indebted for a great deal of interesting matter relative to the events at Charekar. To Captain Colin Mackenzie of the Madras

army, political assistant at Peshawur, my obligations are greater than I can express, for his most valuable aid in the preparation of these notes, as well as for his excellent account of the attack on Brigadier Anquetil's fort, and the sad detail of the Envoy's cruel murder, and the circumstances therewith connected. To Captain Lawrence, late military secretary to the Envoy, and to Captain Troup, late Brigade-Major to the Shah's force, I am likewise bound to offer my best acknowledgments for much important information.

The plan of cantonments and of the surrounding country, being drawn entirely from memory, requires indulgent criticism, but I trust it is sufficiently accurate to give the reader a tolerably correct idea of the nature of our position.

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GLOSSARY.

The following LIST OF WORDS used in this volume, with their meanings, may be useful to the English reader.

Akukzye, or *Atchakzye*, the name of one of the great Affghan tribes.

Ameer, commander or chief; title assumed by Dost Mahomed Khan.

Atta, ground wheat.

Ayah, a nurse.

Bala Hissar, royal citadel, upper citadel.

Barukzye, name of one of the five great Dúráni or Dooranee tribes.

Bourge, tower.

Buniah, a trader, generally in grain.

Cafila, a convoy.

Char Chouk, public bazar. *Chaháa*, or *char*, means house, the bazar being introduced at right angles in the centre.

Chouk, bazar.

Chuprassie, a servant bearing a badge or brass plate.

Chuppao, a night surprise, or plundering attack.

Cossid, a messenger.

Debashee. A serjeant or leader of ten men.

Dewan Kanch, hall of audience.

Doohlie, palanquin for carrying sick.

Dooranee, name of five great tribes, the Popul-zai, Barak-zai, Núr-zai, Báirmi-zai, and Abkhu-zai.

- Ensofzyes*, an Affghan tribe holding the territory north of Peshawur
- Feringhee*, European
- Ghatee*, champion of religion
- Gihye*, name of a great Affghan tribe
- Godoun*, storehouse
- Goorkha*, a native of Nepal
- Havildar*, a sergeant
- Hazirbash* means "Be present"
- Janbaz*, Affghan horse
- Jecigha* council
- Jemandar*, a native officer
- Jurail*, long rifle
- Juzailchee*, rifleman
- Kafir*, infidel
- Khan*, nobleman the title in Kâbul is assumed by every one, even the lowest
- Kirkhee*, a wicket, window
- Kujawur*, a pannier carried on camels
- Kur ilbash*, descendant of the Persians, wearing a red cap
- Lascar*, Indian term, an attendant on guns, magazines, &c
- Mauud* (of grain), 80 lb weight
- Meer-a* an appellation generally given to Mahomed in writers
- Meer Wyze* (*The*) means a teacher, generally conferred on some one eminent for sanctity
- Mehmendar*, a man of all work, one who has charge of receiving guests, visitors, &c
- Moollah*, priest
- Moonshee*, interpreter or secretary
- Musjed*, a temple place of worship
- Naib*, deputy
- Nalkee*, a sort of palanquin
- Nair*, steward
- Neeucha*, coat
- Nuwab*, prince
- Pilao*, a dish of fowl with rice, &c
- Postheen*, a sheepskin cloak

Rajah, prince, an Indian term.

Ressala, a troop.

Sepoy, soldier, an Indian term; always *native* soldier.

Shah bagh, king's garden.

Shroff, a native banker.

Sirdar, a chief.

Subschoon, or *Shub-khoon* (the proper term), night surprise.

Sunga, stone breastwork.

Surwon, a man who takes care of camels.

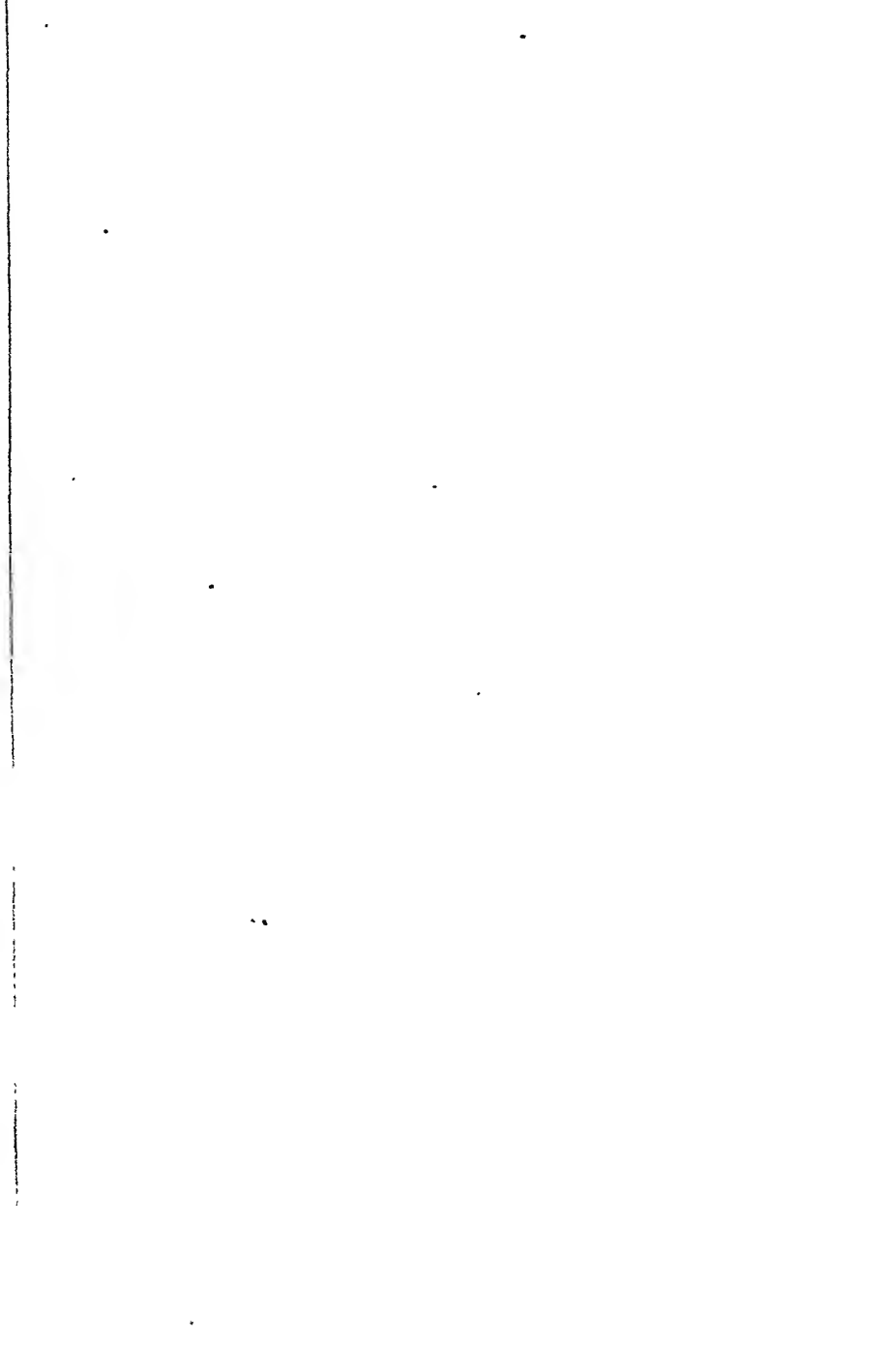
Syud, a priest.

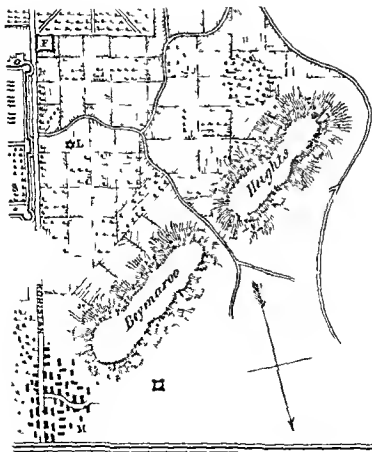
Wuzeer, vizier.

Yaboo, Affghan pony.

Zuna, dwelling; (*Kunch*) private dwelling.







OPERATIONS
OF
THE BRITISH ARMY
AT
CABUL.

NOTES OF OPERATIONS,

ETC.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

INTERNAL STATE OF AFFGHANISTAN IN 1841. — DISAFFECTION — ESPECIALLY IN KOHISTAN, AND MILITARY OPERATIONS THERE. — MARCH OF GENERAL SALE FOR JELLALABAD, WHO HAS TO FIGHT HIS WAY. — EARLIER PREMONITORY SYMPTOMS OF DISTURBANCE.

WHEN Major-Gen. Elphinstone assumed the command of the troops in Affghanistan in April, 1841, the country enjoyed a state of apparent tranquillity to which it had for many years been a stranger. This remark applies more particularly to those provinces which lie north-east of Ghuznee, comprehending Cabul proper, Kohistan, Jellalabad, and the neighbouring districts. The Giljye tribes, occupying a large portion of the country between Ghuznee and Candahar, had never been properly subdued, and the permanent occupation of Khelat-i-Giljye by our troops had

so alarmed their jealous love of independence, as to cause, during the months of July and August, a partial rising of the tribes, which, however, the valour of our Hindoostance troops, under Colonel Wymer, at Huft-aseer, and of the 5th Bengal Cavalry under Col Chambers at Mookoor, speedily suppressed. Some of the principal chiefs delivered themselves up as hostages, and quiet was restored. To the west of Candahar, a notorious freebooter, named Akter Khan, having collected about 7000 followers, horse and foot, was signally defeated near Girhisk, on the banks of the Heermund, in the month of July, by a detachment of the Shah's regular troops under Capt Woodburn, consisting of only one infantry regiment, two H. A. guns, under Lieut Cooper, besides two regiments of *Janbaz*, or Affghan horse the latter, however, behaved ill, and can hardly be said to have shared in the glory of the unequal conflict. Capt Griffin, with the Bengal 2d Native Infantry, was, a few days after, equally successful in an attack on the enemy in the same quarter. Akter Khan fled to the hills with a few followers, and the land again enjoyed repose. Kohistan, whose wild and turbulent chiefs had sturdily maintained their independence against the late ruler, Dost Mahommed Khan, seemed at last to have settled down into a state of quiet, though

unwilling, subjection to Shah Shoojah. The Nijrow chiefs formed an almost solitary exception to this show of outward submission; and Sir William Macnaghten had strongly urged, at an early period of the year, the expediency of sending a force into that country as soon as practicable. Since our first occupation of Cabul, Nijrow had become a resort for all such restless and discontented characters as had rendered themselves obnoxious to the existing government. The fact of our having permitted them so long to brave us with impunity, had doubtless been regarded by the secret enemies of the new rule as a mark of conscious weakness, and may have encouraged them, in no slight degree, to hatch those treasonable designs against the state which were so suddenly developed in November, 1841, and which were for the time, unhappily, but too successful.

Major Pottinger, having been appointed political agent in Kohistan, arrived from Calcutta in May, 1841, and was one of the first to prognosticate the coming storm. He lost no time in representing to the Envoy the insufficiency of our military force in Kohistan, consisting at that time of merely two 6-pounder guns, and the Kohistanec regiment raised by Lieut. Maule of the Bengal Ar-

train, 2 comp. Sbah's Sappers, and 2 squadrons of Anderson's horse. These were under the command of Lieut.-Col. Oliver, and were accompanied by Capt. G. H. Macgregor, the political agent at Gundamuck, who happened to be then at Cabul on business. The force commenced its march on the 27th September, and reached the Zoormut valley without the slightest interruption. On the approach of our troops the rebels had fled to the hills in the greatest consternation, leaving their forts at our mercy. The principal strongholds were destroyed with powder, and the force prepared to return to Cabul.

Meanwhile the hydra of rebellion had reared its head in another far more formidable quarter. Early in October three Giljye chiefs of note suddenly quitted Cabul, after plundering a rich Cafila at Tezeen, and took up a strong position in the difficult defile of Khoord-Cabul, about ten miles from the capital, thus blocking up the pass, and cutting off our communication with Hindostan. Intelligence had not very long previously been received that Mahomed Akber Khan, second son of the ex-ruler Dost Mahomed Khan, had arrived at Bameean from Khooloom for the supposed purpose of carrying on intrigues against the government. It is remarkable that he is nearly connected by marriage with Mahomed

Shah Khan and Dost Mahomed Khan*, also Giljyes, who almost immediately joined the above-mentioned chiefs. Mahomed Akber had, since the deposition of his father, never ceased to foster feelings of intense hatred towards the English nation; and, though often urged by the fallen ruler to deliver himself up, had resolutely preferred the life of a houseless exile to one of mean dependence on the bounty of his enemies. It seems therefore in the highest degree probable that this hostile movement on the part of the Eastern Giljyes was the result of his influence over them, combined with other causes which will be hereafter mentioned. The march of Gen. Sale's brigade to their winter quarters at Jellalabad, and ultimately to India, had only been deferred until the return of the force from Zoormut, but was now hastened in consequence of this unwelcome news. On the 9th October the 35th regt. N. I. under Col. Monteath, C.B., 100 of the Shah's Sappers under Capt. G. Broadfoot, a squadron of the 5th cavalry under Capt. Oldfield, and 2 guns of Capt. Abbott's battery under Lieut. Dawes, were sent on in advance to the entrance of the pass at Bootkhak, where, on the following night, it was attacked by a large num-

* This chief must not be confounded with the ex-ruler of the same name.

ber of rebels, who, taking advantage of the high ground and deep ravines in the neighbourhood of the camp, maintained a sharp fire upon it for several hours, by which 35 Sepoys were killed and wounded.

On the morning of the 11th Gen. Sale marched from Cabul with H. M. 13th Lt. Inf. to join the camp at Bootkhak, and on the following morning the whole proceeded to force the pass. Intelligence had been received that the enemy, besides occupying the heights of this truly formidable defile, which in many places approach to within fifty yards of each other, rising up almost perpendicularly to an elevation of 500 or 600 feet, had erected a *sunga*, or stone breastwork, in the narrowest part of the gorge, flanked by a strong tower. The advance guard, consisting of the Shah's Sappers, a company of H. M. 13th foot, another of the 35th N. I., and 2 guns under Lieut. Dawes, was met about midway through the pass, which is nearly five miles long, by a sharp and continued discharge of juzails from the strong posts of the enemy. This was returned by our men with precision and effect, notwithstanding the disadvantages of their situation; flanking parties gallantly struggled up the height to dislodge the enemy from thence, while the Sappers rushed on to destroy the above-mentioned breast-

work: through this, however, the stream which flows down the middle of the defile had already forced a passage; and, as the enemy abandoned it, as well as the flanking tower, on the approach of our troops, Lieut. Dawes passed his guns through the interval at full speed, getting them under the shelter of a rock beyond the sustained and murderous fire of the enemy's juzailchees, it being impossible to elevate the guns sufficiently to bear upon them. The flankers did their duty nobly, and the fight had lasted for about half an hour, during which the conduct of the Shah's Sappers under Capt. Broadfoot was creditable in the highest degree, when the approach of the main column under Gen. Sale, who had been already shot through the leg, enabled Capt. Seaton of the 35th regiment, who commanded the advance guard, to push on. This he did, running the gauntlet to the end of the pass, by which time the enemy, fearful of being taken in rear, abandoned their position, and retired towards Kubbur-i-Jubbar, on the road to Tezeen. The 35th regiment, Shah's Sappers, Lieut. Dawes's guns, and a party of Hazirbash under Capt. Trevor, encamped at Khoord-Cabul, H. M.'s 13th Lt. Inf. returning to Bootkhak. During their return, parties who still lurked among the rocks fired upon the column, thereby doing some mischief.

In these positions the divided force remained encamped for several days, awaiting the return to Cabul of the troops from Zoormut. During this time several *shub-khoons*, or night attacks, were made on the two camps, that on the 35th regiment at Khoord-Cabul being peculiarly disastrous from the treachery of the Affghan horse, who admitted the enemy within their lines, by which our troops were exposed to a fire from the least suspected quarter: many of our gallant Sepoys and Lieut. Jenkins thus met their death.

On the 20th October, Gen. Sale moved with his force to Khoord-Cabul, having been previously joined by the 37th regiment under Major Griffiths, Capt. Abbot's guns, the mountain train under Capt. Backhouse, 100 of Anderson's irregular horse under Lieut. Mayne, and the remainder of the Shah's sappers and miners. About the 22d the whole force there assembled, with Capt. Macgregor, political agent, marched to Tezeen, encountering much determined opposition on the road.

By this time it was too evident that the whole of the Eastern Giljyes had risen in one common league against us. Their governor, or viceroy, Humza Khan, had in the interval gone forth under pretence of bringing back the chiefs to their allegiance; on his return, however, which took

place nearly at the time at which Gen. Sale marched from Khoord-Cabul, the treacherous nature of his proceedings had been discovered, and he was placed by the Shah in confinement : he was suspected, indeed, before. Gen. Sale remained at Tezeen until the 26th October.

It must be remarked that, for some time previous to these overt acts of rebellion, the always strong and ill-repressed personal dislike of the Affghans towards Europeans had been manifested in a more than usually open manner in and about Cabul. Officers had been insulted and attempts made to assassinate them. Two Europeans had been murdered, as also several camp followers ; but these and other signs of the approaching storm had unfortunately been passed over as mere ebullitions of private angry feeling. This incredulity and apathy is the more to be lamented, as it was pretty well known that on the occasion of the *shub-khoon*, or first night attack on the 35th N. I. at Bootkhak, a large portion of our assailants consisted of the armed retainers of the different men of consequence in Cabul itself, large parties of whom had been seen proceeding from the city to the scene of action on the evening of the attack, and afterwards returning. Although these men had to pass either through the heart or round the skirts of our camp at

Seeah Sung, it was not deemed expedient even to question them, far less to detain them.

On the 26th October, Gen Sale started in the direction of Gundamuck, Capt Macgregor, political agent, having, during the halt at Tezeen, half frightened half enjoyed the refractory Giljye chiefs into what the sequel proved to have been a most hollow truce, for the term *treaty* can scarcely be applied to any agreement made with men so proverbially treacherous, as the whole race of Affghans have proved themselves to be, from our first knowledge of their existence up to the present moment. Of the difficulties experienced by Gen Sale during his march to Gundamuck, and of the necessity which induced him subsequently to push on to Tellalabad, the public are aware. On the day of his departure from Tezeen the 37th N I, 3 companies of the Shah's sappers, under Capt. Walsh, and 3 guns of the mountain train, under Leut Green, retraced their steps towards Cabul, and encamped at Kubbur-i-Jubbar, to wait as an escort to the sick and convalescent. The sappers continued their march back to Cabul unopposed; the rest remained here unmolested until the 1st November, when they broke ground for Khoord Cabul. Here, in the afternoon of the 2d, Major Griffiths, who commanded the detachment, received a percip

tory order from Gen. Elphinstone to force his way without loss of time to Cabul, where the insurrection had already broken out in all its violence. While striking his camp he was attacked by the mountaineers, who now began to assemble on the neighbouring heights in great numbers; and his march through the pass from Bootkhak to Cabul was one continued conflict, nothing saving him from heavy loss but the steadiness and gallantry of his troops, and the excellence of his own dispositions. He arrived in cantonments before daybreak on the morning of the 3d November.

The two great leaders of the rebellion were Ameenollah Khan, the chief of Logur, and Abdoollah Khan, Achukzye, a chief of great influence, and possessing a large portion of the Pisheen valley.

Ameenollah Khan had hitherto been considered one of the staunchest friends of the existing government; and such was the confidence placed in him by the wuzeer, that he had selected him to take charge of Humza Khan, the lately superseded governor of the Giljyes, as a prisoner to Ghuznee. This man now distinguished himself as one of our most inveterate enemies. To illustrate the character of his coadjutor, Abdoollah Khan it will be sufficient to relate the following

anecdote. In order to get rid of his elder brother, who stood between him and the inheritance, he caused him to be seized and buried up to the chin in the earth. A rope was then fastened round his neck, and to the end of it was haltered a wild horse: the animal was then driven round in a circle, until the unhappy victim's head was twisted from his shoulders. This same man is also mentioned in terms of just abhorrence by Capt. A. Conolly in his Travels.

But though the two above-named chiefs took a leading part in the rebellion, there can be little doubt that it had its origin in the deep offence given to the Giljyes by the ill-advised reduction of their annual stipends. This they considered, and with some show of justice, as a breach of faith on the part of our government: at all events, that was surely mistaken economy which raised into hostility men, whose determined spirit under a sense of wrong the following anecdote may illustrate. When oppressed by Nadir Shah, the Giljye tribes, rather than succumb to the tyrant's will, took refuge in the mountains amidst the snow, where with their families they fed for months on roots alone: of these they sent a handful to Nadir, with the message, that, so long as such roots could be procured, they would continue to resist his tyranny. Such were many

of the men now leagued together by one common feeling of hatred against us.

A passage occurring in a posthumous memorandum by the Envoy, now in Lady Macnaghten's possession, requires insertion here : —

“ The immediate cause of the outbreak in the capital was a seditious letter addressed by Abdollah Khan to several chiefs of influence at Cabul, stating that it was the design of the Envoy to seize and send them all to London ! The principal rebels met on the previous night, and, relying on the inflammable feelings of the people of Cabul, they pretended that the king had issued an order to put all infidels to death ; having previously forged an order from him for our destruction, by the common process of washing out the contents of a genuine paper, with the exception of the seal, and substituting their own wicked inventions.”

Such at least is the generally received version of the story, though persons are not wanting who would rashly pronounce the king guilty of the design imputed to him.

But, however that may be, it is certain that the events, which I have already narrated, ought to have been enough to arouse the authorities from their blind security. It ought, however, to be stated that, alarmed by certain symptoms of

disaffection in different parts of the country, and conscious of the inadequacy of the means he then possessed to quell any determined and general insurrection, Sir William had, a few months previously, required the presence of several more regiments: he was however induced to cancel this wise precautionary measure. But, even had this additional force arrived, it is next to certain that the loss of British honour, subsequently sustained, could only have been deferred for a period. A fearfully severe lesson was necessary to remove the veil from the eyes of those, who, drawing their conclusions from their wishes, *would* consider Afghanistan as a settled country. It is but justice to Sir William Macnaghten to say that such recommendations from him as were incompatible with the retrenching system were not received at head-quarters in a way encouraging to him as a public officer.

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CHAPTER I.

OUTBREAK OF THE REBELLION. — MURDER OF SIR ALEXANDER BURNES. — WANT OF ENERGY. — ATTACKS ON CAPT. LAWRENCE AND LIEUT. STURT. — CHARACTER OF GEN. ELPHINSTONE. — UNMILITARY POSITION AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE CANTONMENT AT CABUL.

November 2d, 1841. — At an early hour this morning, the startling intelligence was brought from the city, that a popular outbreak had taken place; that the shops were all closed; and that a general attack had been made on the houses of all British officers residing in Cabul. About 8 A. M. a hurried note was received by the Envoy in cantonments from Sir Alexander Burnes *, stating that the minds of the people had been strongly excited by some mischievous reports, but expressing a hope that he should succeed in quelling the commotion. About 9 A. M., however, a rumour was circulated, which afterwards proved but too well founded, that Sir Alexander had been murdered, and Capt. Johnson's treasury

* The Envoy lived in the cantonment, and Sir A. Burnes in the city.

plundered. Flames were now seen to issue from that part of the city where they dwelt, and it was too apparent that the endeavour to appease the people by quiet means had failed, and that it would be necessary to have recourse to stronger measures. The report of firearms was incessant, and seemed to extend through the town from end to end.

Sir William Macnaghten now called upon Gen. Elphinstone to act. An order was accordingly sent to Brigadier Shelton, then encamped at Seeah Sung, about a mile and half distant from cantonments, to march forthwith to the *Bala His-sar*, or *royal citadel*, where his Majesty Shah Shooja resided, commanding a large portion of the city, with the following troops; viz. one company of H. M. 44th foot; a wing of the 54th regiment N. I., under Major Ewart; the 6th regiment Shali's infantry, under Capt. Hopkins; and 4 horse artillery guns, under Capt. Nicholl; and on arrival there to act according to his own judgment, after consulting with the King.

The remainder of the troops encamped at Seeah Sung were at the same time ordered into cantonments; viz. H. M. 44th foot under Lieut-Col. Mackerell; 2 horse artillery guns under Lieut. Waller; and Anderson's irregular horse. A messenger was likewise despatched to recall the 37th

N. I. from Khoord-Cabul without delay. The troops at this time in cantonments were as follows: viz. 5th regiment N. I., under Lieut.-Col. Oliver; a wing of 54th N. I.; 5 six-pounder field guns, with a detachment of the Shah's artillery, under Lieut. Warburton; the Envoy's body-guard; a troop of Skinner's horse, and another of local horse, under Lieut. Walker; three companies of the Shah's sappers, under Capt. Walsh; and about 20 men of the Company's sappers, attached to Capt. Paton, Assist.-Qr.-Mast.-Gen.

Widely spread and formidable as this insurrection proved to be afterwards, it was at first a mere insignificant ebullition of discontent on the part of a few desperate and restless men, which military energy and promptitude ought to have crushed in the bud. Its commencement was an attack by certainly not 300 men on the dwellings of Sir Alexander Burnes and Capt. Johnson, paymaster to the Shah's force; and so little did Sir Alexander himself apprehend serious consequences, that he not only refused, on its *first* breaking out, to comply with the earnest entreaties of the wuzeer to accompany him to the Bala Hissar, but actually forbade his guard to *fire* on the assailants, attempting to check ~~that~~ *what* he supposed to be a mere riot, by ~~hanging~~ *hanging* the attacking party from the *gallery* of his house.

The result was fatal to himself, for, in spite of the devoted gallantry of the Sepoys, who composed his guard, and that of the paymaster's office and treasury on the opposite side of the street, who yielded their trust only with their latest breath, the latter were plundered, and his two companions, Lieut. William Broadfoot of the Bengal European regiment, and his brother Lieut Burnes of the Bombay army, were massacred, in common with every man, woman, and child found on the premises, by these bloodthirsty miscreants Lieut Broadfoot killed five or six men with his own hand, before he was shot down

No man, surely, in a highly responsible public situation—especially in such a one as that held by the late Sir Alexander Burnes—ought ever to indulge in a state of blind security, or to neglect salutary warnings, however small. It is indisputable that such warnings had been given to him, especially by a respectable Affghan named Taj-Mahomed, on the very previous night, who went in person to Sir A. Burnes to put him on his guard, but retired disgusted by the incredulity with which his assertions were received. It is not for me to comment on *his* public character. It is the property of the civilized portion of the world, but it is due to another, little known beyond the immediate sphere in which he moved, to say that,

had this outbreak been productive of no effects beyond the death of *Lieut. William Broadfoot*, it could not be sufficiently deplored : in him was lost to the state not only one of its bravest and most intelligent officers, but a man who for honesty of purpose and soundness of judgment, I may boldly aver, could not be surpassed.

The King, who was in the Bala Hissar, being somewhat startled by the increasing number of the rioters, although not at the time aware, so far as we can judge, of the assassination of Sir A. Burnes, despatched one of his sons with a number of his immediate Affghan retainers, and that corps of Hindoostanees commonly called Campbell's regiment, with two guns, to restore order : no support, however, was rendered to these by our troops, whose leaders appeared so thunderstruck by the intelligence of the outbreak, as to be incapable of adopting more than the most puerile defensive measures. Even Sir William Macnaghten seemed, from a note received at this time from him by Captain Trevor, to apprehend little danger, as he therein expressed his perfect confidence as to the speedy and complete success of Campbell's Hindoostanees in putting an end to the disturbance. Such, however, was not the case ; for the enemy, encouraged by our inaction, increased rapidly in spirit and numbers, and drove

back the king's guard with great slaughter, the guns being with difficulty saved

It must be understood that Capt Trevor lived at this time with his family in a strong *bourge*, or tower, situated by the riverside, near the Kuzzilbash quarter, which, on the west, is wholly distinct from the remainder of the city. Within musket shot, on the opposite side of the river, in the direction of the strong and populous village of Deh Affghan, is a fort of some size, then used as a godown, or storehouse, by the Shah's commissariat, part of it being occupied by Brigadier Anquetil, commanding the Shah's force. Close to this fort, divided by a narrow watereourse, was the house of Capt Troup, Brigade Major of the Shah's force, perfectly defensible against musketry. Both Brigadier Anquetil and Capt Troup had gone out on horseback early in the morning towards entonments, and were unable to return, but the above fort and house contained the usual guard of Sepoys, and in a garden close at hand called the *Laboo-Khaneh*, or lines of the baggage-cattle, was a small detachment of the Shah's sappers and miners, and a party of Captain Ferris's *juzailchees*. Capt. Trevor's tower was capable of being made good against a much stronger force than the rebels at this present time could have collected, had it been properly garrisoned.

As it was, the Hazirbash, or King's life-guards, were, under Capt. Trevor, congregated round their leader, to protect him and his family ; which duty, it will be seen, they well performed under very trying circumstances. For what took place in this quarter I beg to refer to a communication made to me at my request by Capt. Colin Mackenzie, Assistant Political Agent at Peshawur, who then occupied the godown portion of the fort above mentioned, which will be found hereafter.

I have already stated that Brigadier Shelton was early in the day directed to proceed with part of the Seeah Sung force to occupy the Bala Hissar, and, if requisite, to lead his troops against the insurgents. Capt. Lawrence, military secretary to the Envoy, was at the same time sent forward to prepare the King for that officer's reception. Taking with him four troopers of the body-guard, he was galloping along the main road, when, shortly after crossing the river, he was suddenly attacked by an Affghan, who, rushing from behind a wall, made a desperate cut at him with a large two-handed knife. He dexterously avoided the blow by spurring his horse on one side ; but, passing onwards, he was fired upon by about fifty men, who, having seen his approach, ran out from the Lahore gate of the city to intercept him. He

reached the Bala Hissar safe, where he found the King apparently in a state of great agitation, he having witnessed the assault from the window of his palace. His Majesty expressed an eager desire to conform to the Envoy's wishes in all respects in this emergency

Capt Lawrence was still conferring with the King, when Lieut Sturt, our executive engineer, rushed into the palace, stabbed in three places about the face and neck. He had been sent by Brigadier Shelton to make arrangements for the accommodation of the troops, and had reached the gate of the *Dewan Khaneh*, or hall of audience, when the attempt at his life was made by some one who had concealed himself there for that purpose, and who immediately effected his escape. The wounds were fortunately not dangerous, and Lieut Sturt was conveyed back to cantonments in the king's own palanquin, under a strong escort. Soon after this, Brig Shelton's force arrived, but the day was suffered to pass without any thing being done demonstrative of British energy and power. The murder of our countrymen, and the spoliation of public and private property, were perpetrated with impunity within a mile of our cantonment, and under the very walls of the Bala Hissar.

Such an exhibition on our part taught the

enemy their strength — confirmed against us, those who, however disposed to join in the rebellion, had hitherto kept aloof from prudential motives, and ultimately encouraged the nation to unite as one man for our destruction.

It was, in fact, the crisis of all others calculated to test the qualities of a military commander. Whilst, however, it is impossible for an unprejudiced person to approve the military dispositions of this eventful period, it is equally our duty to discriminate. The most *responsible* party is not always the most culpable. It would be the height of injustice to a most amiable and gallant officer not to notice the long course of painful and wearing illness, which had materially affected the nerves, and probably even the intellect, of Gen. Elphinstone; cruelly incapacitating him, so far as he was personally concerned, from acting in this sudden emergency with the promptitude and vigour necessary for our preservation. Major-Gen. Elphinstone had in fact represented to head-quarters the shattered state of his health, stating plainly and honestly that it had unfitted him to continue in command, and was on the point of returning to India, thence to embark for England, when the rebellion unhappily broke out. No one, who knew Gen. Elphinstone, could fail to esteem his many excellent qualities both

in public and private life To all under his command, not excepting the youngest subaltern, he was ever accessible, and in the highest degree courteous and considerate nor did he ever exhibit, either in word or practice, the slightest partiality for officers of his own service over those of the Company His professional knowledge was extensive, and, before disease had too much impaired his frame for active exertion, he had zealously applied himself to improve and stimulate every branch of the service He had, indeed, but one unhappy fault as a general — the result, probably, of age and infirmity — and this was a want of confidence in his own judgment, leading him to prefer every body's opinion to his own, until, amidst the conflicting views of a multitude of counsellors, he was at a loss which course to take Hence much of that indecision, procrastination, and want of method, which paralyzed all our efforts, gradually demoralised the troops, and ultimately, not being redeemed by the qualities of his second in command, proved the ruin of us all I might add that, during the siege, no one exposed his person more fearlessly or frequently to the enemy's fire than Gen Elphinstone but his gallantry was never doubted Unhappily, Sir William Macnaghten at first made light of the insurrection, and, by his representations as to the

general feeling of the people towards us, not only deluded himself, but misled the General in council. The unwelcome truth was soon forced upon us, that in the whole Affghan nation we could not reckon on a single friend.

But though no active measures of aggression were taken, all necessary preparations were made to secure the cantonment against attack. It fell to my own lot to place every available gun in position round the works. Besides the guns already mentioned, we had in the magazine 6 nine-pounder iron guns, 3 twenty-four pounder howitzers, 1 twelve-pounder ditto, and 3 5½-inch mortars ; but the detail of artillerymen fell very short of what was required to man all these efficiently, consisting of only 80 Punjabees belonging to the Shah, under Lieut. Warburton, very insufficiently instructed, and of doubtful fidelity.

To render our position intelligible, it is necessary to describe the cantonment, or fortified lines so called. It is uncertain whether, for the faults which I am about to describe, any blame justly attaches to Lieut. Sturt, the engineer, a talented and sensible officer, but who was often obliged to yield his better judgment to the spirit of false economy which characterised our Affghan policy. The credit, however, of having selected a site for the cantonments, or controlled the execution of

its works, is not a distinction now likely to be claimed exclusively by any one. But it must always remain a wonder that any Government, or any officer or set of officers, who had either science or experience in the field, should, in a half-conquered country, fix their forces (already inadequate to the services to which they might be called) in so extraordinary and injudicious a military position. Every engineer officer who had been consulted, since the first occupation of Cabul by our troops, had pointed to the Bala Hissar as the only suitable place for a garrison which was to keep in subjection the city and the surrounding country; but, above all, it was surely the only proper site for the *magazine*, on which the army's efficiency depended. In defiance, however, of rule and precedent, the position eventually fixed upon for our magazine and cantonment was a piece of low swampy ground, commanded on all sides by hills or forts. It consisted of a low rampart and a narrow ditch in the form of a parallelogram, thrown up along the line of the Kohistan road, 1000 yards long and 600 broad, with round flanking bastions at each corner, every one of which was commanded by some fort or hill. To one end of this work was attached a space nearly half as large again, and surrounded by a simple wall. This was called the "Mission Compound:" half

of it was appropriated for the residence of the Envoy, the other half being crowded with buildings, erected without any attempt at regularity, for the accommodation of the officers and assistants of the mission, and the Envoy's body-guard. This large space required in time of siege to be defended, and thus materially weakened the garrison; while its very existence rendered the whole face of the cantonment, to which it was annexed, nugatory for purposes of defence. Besides these disadvantages, the lines were a great deal too extended, so that the ramparts could not be properly manned without harassing the garrison. On the eastern side, about a quarter of a mile off, flowed the Cabul river in a direction parallel with the Kohistan road. Between the river and cantonments, about 150 yards from the latter, was a wide canal. Gen. Elphinstone, on his arrival in April, 1841, perceived at a glance the utter unfitness of the cantonment for purposes of protracted defence, and when a new fort was about to be built for the magazine on the south side, he liberally offered to purchase for the government, out of his own funds, a large portion of the land in the vicinity, with the view of removing some very objectionable inclosures and gardens, which offered shelter to our enemy within two hundred yards of our ramparts; but neither was his offer accepted, nor

were his representations on the subject attended with any good result. He lost no time, however, in throwing a bridge over the river, in a direct line between the cantonments and the Seerh Sung camp, and in rendering the bridge over the canal passable for guns, which judicious measure shortened the distance for artillery and infantry by at least two miles, sparing, too, the necessity which existed previously of moving to and fro by the main road, which was commanded by three or four forts, as well as from the city walls. Moreover, the Cabul River being liable to sudden rises, and almost always unfordable during the rainy season (March and April), it will easily be understood that the erection of this bridge was a work of much importance. But the most unaccountable oversight of all, and that which may be said to have contributed most largely to our subsequent disasters, was that of having *the commissariat stores detached from cantonments*, in an old fort which, in an outbreak, would be almost indefensible. Capt. Skinner, the chief commissariat officer, at the time when this arrangement was made, earnestly solicited from the authorities a place *within* the cantonment for his stores, but received for answer that "no such place could be given him, as they were far too busy in erecting barracks for the men to think of commissariat stores."

The Envoy himself pressed this point very urgently, but without avail. At the south-west angle of cantonments was the bazar village, surrounded by a low wall, and so crowded with mud huts as to form a perfect maze. Nearly opposite, with only the high road between, was the small fort of Mahomed Shereef, which perfectly commanded our south-west bastion. Attached to this fort was the Shah Bagh, or King's garden, surrounded by a high wall, and comprising a space of about half a square mile. About two hundred yards higher up the road towards the city, was the commissariat fort, the gate of which stood very nearly opposite the entrance of the Shah Bagh. There were various other forts at different points of our works, which will be mentioned in the course of events. On the east, at the distance of about a mile, was a range of low hills dividing us from the Seeah Sung camp; and on the west, about the same distance off, was another somewhat higher range, at the north-east flank of which, by the road-side, was the village of *Beymaroo*, commanding a great part of the Mission Compound. In fact, we were so hemmed in on all sides, that, when the rebellion became general, the troops could not move out a dozen paces from either gate, without being exposed to the fire of some neighbouring hostile fort, garrisoned too by marks-

men who seldom missed their aim. The country around us was likewise full of impediments to the movements of artillery and cavalry, being in many places flooded, and every where closely intersected by deep water-cuts.

I cannot help adding, in conclusion, that almost all the calamities that befel our ill-starred force may be traced more or less to the defects of our position; and that our cantonment at Cabul, whether we look to its situation or its construction, must ever be spoken of as a disgrace to our military skill and judgment.

CHAP. II.

THE 37TH REGIMENT ATTACKED ON ITS RETURN FROM KHOORD-CABUL. — MURDER OF LIEUTS. MAULE AND WHEELER. — LOSS OF THE COMMISSARIAT FORT. — THE GENERAL'S INDECISION. — MAJOR THAIN AND CAPT. PATON. — SUCCESSFUL ATTACK ON THE FORT OF MAHOMED SHEREEF. — ENGAGEMENTS WITH AFFGHAN HORSE AND FOOT. — THE ENEMY'S PLAN TO REDUCE THE BRITISH BY STARVATION. — BRIGADIER SHELTON SENT FOR FROM BALA HISSAR.

November 3d. — AT 3 A. M. the alarm was sounded at the eastern gate of cantonments, in consequence of a brisk file-firing in the direction of Seeah Sung, which turned out to proceed from the 37th regiment N. I. on its return from Khoord-Cabul, having been closely followed up the whole way by a body of about 3000 Giljyes. The regiment managed, nevertheless, to save all its baggage excepting a few tents, which were left on the ground for want of carriage, and to bring in all the wounded safe.

A more orderly march was never made under such trying circumstances, and it reflects the highest credit on Major Griffiths and all concerned. This regiment was a valuable acqui-

sition to our garrison, being deservedly esteemed one of the best in the service. Three guns of the mountain train under Lieut Green accompanied them, and were of the greatest use in defending the rear on the line of march. In consequence of their arrival, a reinforcement was sent into the Bala Hissar, consisting of the left wing 54th N I, with Lieut Green's guns, 1 iron nine-pounder, 1 twenty four pounder howitzer, 2 5½-inch mortars, and a supply of magazine stores. They all reached it in safety, though a few shots were fired at the rear guard from some orchards near the city. Brigadier Shelton was ordered to maintain a sharp fire upon the city from the howitzers and guns, and to endeavour to fire the houses by means of shells and carcasses from the two mortars, should he also find it practicable to send a force into the city, he was to do so.

Early in the afternoon, a detachment under Major Swayne, consisting of two companies 5th N I, one of H M 14th, and 2 H A guns under Lieut Waller, proceeded out of the western gate towards the city, to effect, if possible, a junction at the Lahore gate with a part of Brigadier Shelton's force from the Bala Hissar. They drove back and defeated a party of the enemy who occupied the road near the Shah Bagh, but

had to encounter a sharp fire from the Kohistan gate of the city, and from the walls of various enclosures, behind which a number of marksmen had concealed themselves, as also from the fort of Mahmood Khan commanding the road along which they had to pass. Lieut. Waller and several Sepoys were wounded. Major Swayne, observing the whole line of road towards the Lahore gate strongly occupied by some Affghan horse and juzailchees, and fearing that he would be unable to effect the object in view with so small a force unsupported by cavalry, retired into cantonments. Shortly after this, a large body of the rebels having issued from the fort of Mahmood Khan, 900 yards south-east of cantonments, extended themselves in a line along the bank of the river, displaying a flag; an iron nine-pounder was brought to bear on them from our south-east bastion, and a round or two of shrapnell caused them to seek shelter behind some neighbouring banks, whence, after some desultory firing on both sides, they retired.

Whatever hopes may have been entertained, up to this period, of a speedy termination to the insurrection, they began now to wax fainter every hour, and an order was despatched to the officer commanding at Candahar to lose no time

in sending to our assistance the 16th and 43d regiments N I (which were under orders for India), together with a troop of horse artillery, and half a regiment of cavalry, an order was likewise sent off to recall Gen. Sale with his brigade from Gundamuck. Capt John Conolly, political assistant to the Envoy, went into the Bala Hissar early this morning, to remain with the King, and to render every assistance in his power to Brigadier Shelton.

On this day Lieut Richard Maule, commanding the Kohistanee regiment, which on its return from Zoormut had been stationed at Kahdarra in Kohistan, about twenty miles north-west of Cabul, with the object of keeping down disaffection in that quarter, being deserted by his men, was, together with local Lieut Wheeler, his adjutant, barbarously murdered by a band of rebels. They defended themselves resolutely for several minutes, but at length fell under the fire of some juzails. Lieut Maule had been previously informed of his danger by a friendly native, but chose rather to run the risk of being sacrificed than desert the post assigned him. Thus fell a noble hearted soldier and a devout Christian.

November 4th —The enemy having taken strong possession of the *Shah Bagh*, or King's Garden,

and thrown a garrison into the fort of Mahomed Shereef, nearly opposite the bazar, effectually prevented any communication between the cantonment and commissariat fort, the gate of which latter was commanded by the gate of the Shah Bagh on the other side of the road.

Ensign Warren of the 5th N. I. at this time occupied the commissariat fort with 100 men, and having reported that he was very hard pressed by the enemy, and in danger of being completely cut off, the General, either forgetful or unaware at the moment of the important fact that upon the possession of this fort we were entirely dependent for provisions, and anxious only to save the lives of men whom he believed to be in imminent peril, hastily gave directions that a party under the command of Capt. Swayne of H. M.'s 44th Regt. should proceed immediately to bring off Ensign Warren and his garrison to cantonments, abandoning the fort to the enemy. A few minutes previously an attempt to relieve him had been made by Ensign Gordon, with a company of the 37th N. I. and eleven camels laden with ammunition; but the party were driven back, and Ensign Gordon killed. Capt. Swayne now accordingly proceeded towards the spot with two companies of H. M.'s 44th; scarcely had they issued from cantonments ere a sharp

and destructive fire was poured upon them from Mahomed Sherceef's fort, which, as they proceeded, was taken up by the marksmen in the Shah Bagh, under whose deadly aim both officers and men suffered severely, Capts Swayne and Robinson of the 44th being killed, and Lieuts Hallahan, Evans, and Fortye wounded, in this disastrous business. It now seemed to the officer, on whom the command had devolved, impracticable to bring off Ensign Warren's party, without risking the annihilation of his own, which had already sustained so rapid and severe a loss in officers, he therefore returned forthwith to cantonments. In the course of the evening, another attempt was made by a party of the 5th Lt Cavalry, but they encountered so severe a fire from the neighbouring enclosures as to oblige them to return without effecting their desired object, with the loss of 8 troopers killed and 14 badly wounded. Capt Boyd, the Assist-Com Gen, having meanwhile been made acquainted with the General's intention to give up the fort, hastened to lay before him the disastrous consequences that would ensue from so doing. He stated that the place contained, besides large supplies of wheat and atta, all his stores of rum, medicine, clothing, &c, the value of which might be estimated at four lacs of rupees, that to abandon such valuable property

would not only expose the force to the immediate want of the necessaries of life, but would infallibly inspire the enemy with tenfold courage. He added that we had not above two days' supply of provisions in cantonments, and that neither himself nor Capt. Johnson of the Shah's commissariat had any prospect of procuring them elsewhere under existing circumstances. In consequence of this strong representation on the part of Capt. Boyd, the General sent immediate orders to Ensign Warren to hold out the fort to the last extremity. (Ensign Warren, it must be remarked, denied having received this note.) Early in the night a letter was received from him to the effect that he believed the enemy were busily engaged in mining one of the towers, and that such was the alarm among the Sepoys that several of them had actually made their escape over the wall to cantonments; that the enemy were making preparations to burn down the gate; and that, considering the temper of his men, he did not expect to be able to hold out many hours longer, unless reinforced without delay. In reply to this he was informed that he would be reinforced by 2 A. M.

At about 9 o'clock P. M. there was an assembly of staff and other officers at the General's house, when the Envoy came in and expressed his serious conviction that, unless Mahomed Shereef's fort

were taken that very night, we should lose the commissariat fort, or at all events be unable to bring out of it provisions for the troops. The disaster of the morning rendered the General extremely unwilling to expose his officers and men to any similar peril, but, on the other hand, it was urged that the darkness of the night would nullify the enemy's fire, who would also most likely be taken unawares, as it was not the custom of the Affghans to maintain a very strict watch at night. A man in Capt Johnson's employ was accordingly sent out to reconnoitre the place, he returned in a few minutes with the intelligence that about twenty men were seated outside the fort near the gate, smoking and talking, and from what he overheard of their conversation, he judged the garrison to be very small, and unable to resist a sudden onset. The debate was now resumed, but another hour passed and the General could not make up his mind. A second spy was despatched, whose report tended to corroborate what the first had said. I was then sent to Lieut Sturt, the engineer, who was nearly recovered from his wounds, for his opinion. He at first expressed himself in favour of an immediate attack, but, on hearing that some of the enemy were on the watch at the gate, he judged it prudent to defer the assault till an early hour in

the morning: this decided the General, though not before several hours had slipped away in fruitless discussion.

Orders were at last given for a detachment to be in readiness at 4 A. M. at the Kohistan gate; and Capt. Bellew, Deputy Assist.-Quar.-Mast.-Gen., volunteered to blow open the gate; another party of H. M.'s 44th were at the same time to issue by a cut in the south face of the rampart, and march simultaneously towards the commissariat fort, to reinforce the garrison. Morning had, however, well dawned ere the men could be got under arms; and they were on the point of marching off, when it was reported that Ensign Warren had just arrived in cantonments with his garrison, having evacuated the fort. It seems that the enemy had actually set fire to the gate; and Ensign Warren, seeing no prospect of a reinforcement, and expecting the enemy every moment to rush in, led out his men by a hole which he had prepared in the wall. Being called upon in a public letter from the Assist.-Adj.-Gen. to state his reasons for abandoning his post, he replied that he was ready to do so before a court of inquiry, which he requested might be assembled to investigate his conduct; it was not, however, deemed expedient to comply with his request.

It is beyond a doubt that our feeble and ineffectual defence of this fort, and the valuable booty it yielded, was the first *fatal* blow to our supremacy at Cabul, and at once determined those chiefs — and more particularly the Kuzzilbashes — who had hitherto remained neutral, to join in the general combination to drive us from the country.

Capt. Trevor, having held out his house against the rebels until all hope of relief was at an end, was safely escorted into cantonments his morning, with his wife and seven children, by his Hazirbash horsemen, who behaved faithfully, but now, out of regard for their families, dispersed to their houses. Capt. Mackenzie likewise, after defending his fort until his ammunition was expended, fought his way into cantonments late last night, having received a slight wound on the road. His men had behaved with the utmost bravery, and made several successful sallies. I here subjoin his own account.

*Letter from CAPT. COLIN MACKENZIE to
LIEUT. V. EYRE.*

MY DEAR EYRE,

As you wish for an account of the manner in which I was besieged in the Kela-i-Nishan Khan, in the breaking out of the Cabul insurrec-

tion, I comply, although unwilling to appear so often in the first person, as I necessarily must, in order to give you a clear idea of the fatal nature of the blunder committed, in not sending me assistance from cantonments. I have by me a copy of some notes, which I made at the request of the late Major Thain, then Aide-de-Camp to our lamented chief, General Elphinstone. You are aware that the fort, in which I chanced to be living, contained the godowns of the Shah's commissariat; and that in one part the quarters of Brigadier Anquetil were situated. For the defence of these, a guard of one havildar, two naicks, and eighteen sepoy had been assigned. The fort itself lies between that quarter of Cabul called the Moorad Khanah and its most western suburb, the Deh-i-Affghan. The Cabul river flows between the fort and the Kuzzilbash quarter (the Chundoul), to the south. Close to it, to the north, divided by a narrow road and a high wall, is a large grove of mulberry trees, known by the name of the Yaboo Khanah, in which the Yaboos of the Shah's commissariat used to be kept; but from which, towards the end of October, 1841, they had fortunately been removed into camp at Seeah Sung. In this Yaboo Khanah was a guard of six suwars; and, by chance, a detachment of a jemadar, and ninety-five men

of Captain Ferris's Juzailchees, as also another of the Shah's sappers, consisting of one jemadar and fifty nine men, including havildars and naicks. These last were encumbered with a host of women and children, brought up from their native country with them by the express orders of the Supreme Government. The house of Captain Troup, late Brigadier Major of the Shah's force, built so as to be capable of a tolerable defence, is about forty yards to the east of the fort, across a narrow canal, and the large tower, occupied by the late Captain Trevor and his family, lies across the river to the south east, distant about 700 yards. This also, at the time, was perfectly defensible. You will easily perceive that, with these posts in our possession, and commanding, as we did, the open space between us, it was a point of importance to maintain our ground until the arrival of what we hourly expected, a regiment from the cantonment, whose presence would have immediately decided the wavering Kuzzil bashies in our favour, and would have cut off all communication between the insurgent population of Delhi-Affghan and their rascally brethren in the Moorid Khanah. Spreading far beyond the Yarboo Khanah, in the direction of cantonments, and circling round the west of the fort down to the river's edge, are walled gardens and groves

which afford excellent cover to a lurking enemy, who were enabled to come, without much danger, to within a few yards of my defences.

Early on the morning of the 2d of November, 1841, as I was preparing to go into cantonments with my baggage, intending to accompany the Envoy on the following day down to Peshawur, it was reported to me that an alarming riot had taken place in the town. Brigadier Anquetil and Captain Troup had gone out on their usual morning ride, not supposing the disturbance was of the importance it has since proved to be. I waited for the return of the above two officers for about an hour, previous to adopting decided measures, either for defence or retreat, — at the same time causing all the guards to stand to their arms. Suddenly a naked man stood before me, covered with blood, from two deep sabre cuts in the head, and five musquet-shots in the arm and body. He proved to be a suwar of Sir W. Macnaghten, who had been sent with a message to Captain Trevor, but who had been intercepted by the insurgents. This being rather a strong hint as to how matters were going on, I immediately gave orders for all the gates to be secured, and personally superintended the removal of the detachments in the Yaboo Khanah, with their wives and families, into the fort. At the same

time I caused loopholes to be bored in the upper walls of Captain Troup's house, in which were a naick and ten sepoy's. Whilst so employed, the armed population of Deh 1 Affghan came pouring down through the gardens, and commenced firing on us. I threw out skirmishers, but, in order to save the helpless followers, we were obliged to abandon the tents and baggage. In covering the retreat, one of my men was killed, and one badly wounded, while about five of the enemy were killed. The whole of the gardens were then occupied by the Affghans from which, in spite of repeated sallies made during the day, we were unable to dislodge them, on the contrary, when ever we returned into the fort, they approached so near as to be able, themselves unseen, to kill and wound my men through the loopholes of my own defences. The canal was during the day cut off, and so closely watched, that one of my followers was shot, while trying to fetch some water, but we fortunately found an old well in Brigadier Anquetil's quarters, the water of which was drinkable. Towards the afternoon, having no ammunition, but what was contained in the soldiers' pouches, I communicated with Cyprian Trevor, who still held his tower, apparently unmolested. Even *then*, Khan Shereen Khan, the chief of the Kuzzilbishes, and four or five other

Khans of consequence, among them the leaders of the Hazirbash regiments, were with poor Trevor, *earnestly expecting that some decided measures on the part of the British would justify them in openly taking our part.**

Trevor despatched my requisition, for ammunition *at least*, if not for more effectual assistance, into cantonments, where it arrived safely, the distance not being more than one mile and a half. Shortly after, our spirits were raised by the apparent approach of a heavy cannonade, and volleys of musquetry from the direction of the Moorad Khanah, and by the flight through the gardens of the multitudes who were assailing me, towards Deh-i-Affghan, from which quarter crowds of women and children began to ascend the hill, evidently in expectation of an assault from our soldiery. But these cheering sounds died away,

* During the expedition into Kohistan, under General Macaskill, I accompanied it, having been placed by General Pollock in charge of Shahzadee Shapoor and the Kuzzilbash camp. In my frequent communications with Khan Shereen Khan, some of the late Kuzzilbash leaders, and with other chiefs of the Kuzzilbash faction, all the circumstances of the late insurrection were over and over again recapitulated, one and all declaring positively that the slightest exhibition of energy on our part in the first instance, more especially in reinforcing my post and that of Trevor, would at once have decided the Kuzzilbashes, and all over whom they possessed any influence, in our favour. Khan Shereen also confirmed the idea, that an offensive movement on the opposite side of the town by Brigadier Shelton, had it been made in the early part of the fatal 2d of November, would at once have crushed the insurrection.

and it was in vain that we strained our eyes, looking for the glittering bayonets through the trees, and round the corners of the principal street leading from cantonments. My besiegers swarmed back with shouts, and it required much exertion on my part to prevent despondency amongst my people, which feeling had been strongly excited by the confirmation of the rumour of the murder of Sir Alexander Burnes, his brother, and Captain Broadfoot, by the sight of the smoke from his burning house, and by the intelligence that the treasury of Captain Johnson, also in the town, had been sacked, and the guard slain. In the evening I served out provisions from the government stores. The attacks continued at intervals during the night, and we had most disagreeable suspicions that the enemy were undermining our north west tower, or bastion. At early dawn we sallied out to ascertain this, but were driven in again, after finding our apprehensions too well verified. There is much dead ground about all Afghan forts, on which it is impossible to bring musquetry to bear, and the towers can always be undermined, in the absence of hand grenades on the part of the besieged. To meet this attempt, we sunk a shaft inside the ground floor of the tower, and I placed four resolute men on the

brink, ready to shoot the first man who should enter. The extent of the fort required all my men to be on duty at the same time, and some now began to wax weary. The cheerfulness of the remainder was not improved by the incessant howling of the women over the dead and dying. As a trait indicative of the character of the Affghan juzailchees, I must mention, that whenever they could snatch five minutes to refresh themselves with a pipe, one or other of them would twang a sort of rude guitar, as an accompaniment to some martial song, which, mingling with the above notes of war, sounded very strangely.

In the middle of this day (3d November), to my great grief, I saw the enemy enter Captain Trevor's tower; and a report was brought to us by two of his servants, who escaped across the river, that he and his family had all been killed, which, though it afterwards proved to be untrue, had a bad effect on my men, whose ammunition had now become very scarce, in spite of my having husbanded it with the greatest care. The scene of plunder now going on in Trevor's house was evident from our ramparts; and the enemy, taking possession of the top, which overlooked my defences, pitched their balls from their large juzails with such accuracy, as to clear my western

face of defenders, and it was only by crawling on my hands and knees up a small flight of steps, and whisking suddenly through the door, that I could ever visit the tower that had been undermined. The guard from Captain Troup's house now clamoured for admittance into the fort, and as Mr Ballou, that gentleman's writer, called out to me that they were ready to abandon their post, I let them in, barricading my own door with sacks of flour. Against the door and small wicket, on Brigadier Anquetil's side, I had already piled heaps of stones and large timbers.

In the afternoon the enemy brought down a large wall piece against us, the balls from which shook the upper walls of one of our towers, alarming the juzailchees much, who dread the effect of any species of ordnance. This disposition to despair was increased by the utter failure of ammunition, and by the Affghians bringing down quantities of fire wood and long poles with combustible matter at the ends, which they deposited under the walls of the Yarboo Khanah, in readiness to burn down my door. Some suwars, who were stationed on Brigadier Anquetil's side of the fort, now broke into a sort of half mutiny, and began pulling down the barricade against his gate, to endeavour to save themselves by the speed of their horses. This I quelled by going

down amongst them with a double-barrelled gun, and threatening to shoot the first man who should disobey my orders. In the evening I was quite exhausted, as were my people; having by that time been fighting and working for nearly forty hours without rest. Indeed, on my part, it had been without refreshment, as eating was impossible from excitement and weariness; and my absence for five minutes at a time from any part of the works disheartened the fighting men. Added to this, my wounded were dying for want of medical aid. I therefore yielded to the representations of my juzailchee jemadar, and of Mr. Ballou, from both of whom I received valuable assistance during the whole affair, and prepared for a retreat to cantonments. This we determined should take place during the early part of the night, at which time, it being then the fast of the Ramazan, we calculated the enemy would be at their principal meal. I ordered the juzailchees to lead, and to answer all questions, in case of encountering a post of the enemy. The wounded were placed on what yaboos I possessed, abandoning every thing in the shape of baggage; these, with the women and children, followed next in order; and I myself proposed to bring up the rear with my few regulars, who, I fondly imagined, would stick by me in case of a hot

pursuit. We were to avoid the town, and to follow the course of the small canal above mentioned, and afterwards to strike off by lanes, and through some fields, in the direction of cantonments. A night retreat is generally disastrous, and this proved no exception to the general rule, but, notwithstanding my strict order that all baggage should be left behind, it being very dark, many of the poor women contrived to slip out, with loads of their little property on their shoulders, making their children walk, whose cries added to the confusion, and to the danger of discovery.

Before we had proceeded half a mile, the rear missed the advance, upon whom a post of the enemy had begun to fire. All my regulars had crept a head with the *juzulehees*, and I found myself alone with a *chuprasse* and two *suwars*, in the midst of a helpless and wailing crowd of women and children. Riding on by myself along a narrow lane, to try and pick out the road, I found myself suddenly surrounded by a party of *Affghans*, whom at first I took to be my own *juzailchees*, and spoke to them as such. They quickly undeceived me, however, by crying out, "*Fering-hee hust*," "Here is an European," and attacking me with swords and knives. Spurring my horse violently, I wheeled round, cutting from right to

left, for I, fortunately, had my own sword drawn previous to the surprise. My blows, by God's mercy, parried the greater part of theirs, and I was lucky enough to cut off the hand of my most outrageous assailant. In short, after a desperate struggle, during which I received two slight sabre cuts, and a blow on the back of my head from a fellow whose sword turned in his hand, which knocked me half off my horse, I escaped out of the crush, passing unhurt through two volleys of musquetry from the whole picket, which, by that time, had become alarmed, and had turned out. They pursued me; but I soon distanced them, crossing several fields at speed, and gaining a road, which I perceived led round the western end of the Shah's garden. Proceeding cautiously along, to my horror, I perceived my path again blocked up by a dense body of Affghans. Retreat was impossible; so, putting my trust in God, I charged into the midst of them, hoping that the weight of my horse would clear my way for me, and reserving my sword-cut for the last struggle. It was well that I did so, for by the time I had knocked over some twenty fellows, I found that they were my own juzailehees. If you ever experienced sudden relief from a hideous nightmare, you may imagine my feelings for the

moment With these worthies, after wandering about for some time, and passing unchallenged by a sleepy post of the enemy, I reached the cantonments During the night many stragglers of my party, principally followers, dropped in During the whole business, from first to last, including the retreat, I had under a dozen killed, and about half that amount wounded, nearly half the former being followers, whereas about thirty of the enemy had bitten the dust, and gone to their place

I cannot close this letter to you without remarking that, amongst other lamentable errors which led to our heavy downfall, that of omitting in the first instance to strengthen my post was, next to Shelton's refusal to pour his brigade into the town, while the rioters yet amounted to barely 200 men, the greatest But the whole blame cannot, in this particular instance, be attributed to our poor friend General Elphinstone He had not been sufficiently informed as to the importance of my position, nor as to the facility with which a strong reinforcement could have reached me That he was specially anxious personally as to my safety there could be no doubt, as was shown by the warmth of his reception of me

I need not remind you of the devoted heroism

displayed throughout the siege by Hussain Khan, the juzailchee jemadar, and the handful of brave men who accompanied him, and who, personally attaching themselves to me, remained under my command to the last. Numbers of them fell; others were disabled; a few departed to their own homes, on the day that I was taken prisoner, and Sir W. Macnaghten was murdered; and, I believe, nearly the sole survivors are some ten or fifteen men, who, with their brave leader, Hussain Khan, are now with us in camp. These proceed with the rest of the juzailchee corps under Captain Ferris to Ferozepore, where we hear they are to be disbanded, and sent back to their own country, to be destroyed by their bloodthirsty countrymen as a reward for their fidelity to us; and yet these were the men, who, during the period I was beleaguered in the fort of Nishan Khan, at a time when I was quite unknown to them, not only refused to listen to the repeated propositions of the Affghans outside to deliver me up to their vengeance, their own safety being thereby insured; but who, during the siege of cantonments, laughed to scorn the most tempting offers on the part of Ameenollah Khan, Mahomed Akbar, and other Affghan chiefs, to induce them to join the general cause of Islam against the Kaffirs,

invariably bringing the letters in which they were conveyed, for my inspection and perusal *

Yours very sincerely,

C. MACKENZIE

Camp Rawul Pindet,
En route to Ferozepore,
Nov 19 1842

November 5th —It no sooner became generally known that the commissariat fort, upon which we were dependent for supplies, had been abandoned, than one universal feeling of indignation pervaded the garrison, nor can I describe the impatience of the troops, but especially the native portion, to be led out for its recapture—a feeling that was by no means diminished by their seeing the Affghians crossing and re-crossing the road between the commissariat fort and the gate of the *Shah Bagh*, laden with the provisions upon which had depended our ability to make a protracted defence. Observing this disposition among the troops, and feeling the importance of checking the triumph of the enemy in its infancy, I strenuously urged the General to send out a party to capture Mahomed Shereef's fort by blowing open the gate, and volunteered myself to keep the

* They were disbanded at Jelam in the Punjab each of the old soldiers receiving a donation of twelve months pay and the rest a gratuity in proportion to the length of their services, with which they all seemed very well satisfied — V. E.

road clear from any sudden advance of cavalry with two H. A. guns, under cover of whose fire the storming party could advance along the road, protected from the fire of the fort by a low wall, which lined the road the whole way. The General agreed; a storming party under Major Swayne, 5th H. I., was ordered; the powder bags were got ready; and at about 12 mid-day we issued from the western gate: the guns led the way, and were brought into action under the partial cover of some trees, within one hundred yards of the fort. For the space of twenty minutes the artillery continued to work the guns under an excessively sharp fire from the walls of the fort; but Major Swayne, instead of rushing forward with his men, as had been agreed, had in the mean time remained stationary under cover of the wall by the road side. The General, who was watching our proceedings from the gateway, observing that the gun ammunition was running short, and that the troops had failed to take advantage of the best opportunity for advancing, recalled us into cantonments: thus the enemy enjoyed their triumph undiminished; and great was the rage of the Sepoys of the 37th N. I., who had evinced the utmost eagerness to be led out, at this disappointment of their hopes. It must be acknowledged that the General was singularly unfortunate

in many of the coadjutors about him, who, with all the zeal and courage which distinguish British officers, were sadly lacking in that military judgment and quicksightedness which are essential to success in a critical moment. Let me here, however, pay a just tribute to the memory of two of his staff officers, now, alas! no more. Few men have ever combined all the excellent qualities which constitute the good soldier and the good man more remarkably than did *Major Thain* of H M's 21st Fusiliers, A D C to Gen Elphinstone, while of *Capt Paton*, Deputy Quartermaster general, it may be safely affirmed, that in solid practical sense and genuine singleness of heart he was never surpassed. Would that all, to whom the General was in the habit of deferring, had been equally wise to counsel and prompt to execute with the two above named gallant men!

November 6th — It was now determined to take the fort of Mahomed Shereef by regular breach and assault. At an early hour, 3 iron nine-pounder guns were brought to bear upon its north east bastion, and 2 howitzers upon the contiguous curtain. I took charge of the former, and Lieut. Warburton of the latter. In the space of about two hours a practicable breach was effected, during which time a hot fire was poured

upon the artillerymen from the enemy's sharpshooters, stationed in a couple of high towers which completely commanded the battery, whereby, as the embrasures crumbled away from the constant concussion, it became at length a difficult task to work the guns. A storming party, composed of 3 companies, viz. 1 comp. H. M. 44th, under Ensign Raban, 1 comp. 5th N. I. under Lieut. Deas, 1 comp. 37th under Lieut. Steer, the whole commanded by Major Griffiths, speedily carried the place. Poor Raban was shot through the heart, when conspicuously waving a flag on the summit of the breach.

As this fort adjoined the Shah Bagh, it was deemed advisable to dislodge the enemy from the latter, if possible. Learning that there was a large opening in the wall in the north side of the garden, I took a six-pounder gun thither, and fired several rounds of grape and shrapnell upon parties of the enemy assembled within under the trees, which speedily drove them out; and had a detachment of infantry taken advantage of the opportunity thus afforded to throw themselves into the building at the principal entrance by the road side, the place might have been easily carried permanently, and immediate repossession could have been then taken of the commissariat fort opposite, which had not yet been emptied of half its con-

tents. While this was going on, a reconnoitring party under Major Thain, A. D. C., consisting of 1 H. A. gun, 1 troop 5th cavalry, and 2 comps. of infantry, scoured the plain to the west of cantonments; and having driven the enemy from several enclosures, were returning homeward, when large numbers of Affghan horse and foot were observed to proceed from the direction of the city towards the south-west extremity of a hill, which runs in a diagonal direction from north-east to south-west across the plain, to the west of cantonments. A resallah of Anderson's horse had been stationed on the summit of this hill all the morning as a picket, whence they had just been recalled, when a large body of the enemy's horse reached the base, and proceeded to crown the summit. Major Thain's party, observing this, came to a halt; and a few minutes afterwards a reinforcement opportunely arrived, consisting of 1 resallah of irregular horse under Capt. Anderson, 1 troop of ditto under Lieut. Walker, and 2 troops 5th cavalry under Capts. Collyer and Bott. I now considered it my duty to join the H. A. gun, which had no officer with it, and I accordingly left the six-pounder gun under the protection of Capt. Mackenzie, who, with a few of his juzailchees, had now joined me, having been engaged in skirmishing across the plain towards the west end of the

Shah Bagh, where, finding an opening, he had crept in with his men, and cleared that part of the garden, but, not being supported, had been obliged to retire with a loss of 15 killed out of 95.

I now advanced with the H. A. gun, supported by a troop of the 5th cavalry, to the foot of the hill, and opened fire upon the enemy, while the rest of the cavalry, headed by Anderson's horse, rode briskly up the slope to force them off. The officers gallantly headed their men, and encountered about an equal number of the enemy, who advanced to meet them. A hand to hand encounter now took place, which ended in the Affghan horse retreating to the plain, leaving the hill in our possession. In this affair Capt. Anderson personally engaged, and slew the brother-in-law of Abdoolah Khan. Meanwhile the enemy began to muster strong on the plain to the west of the Shah Bagh, whence they appeared to be gradually extending themselves towards the cantonments, as if to intercept our return; it was therefore deemed prudent to recall the cavalry from the height, and show front in the plain, where they could act with more effect. A reinforcement of two companies of infantry and one H. A. gun was sent out, and the whole force was drawn up in order of battle, anticipating an attack, with one gun on either flank. In this position a distant

fire was kept up by the enemy's *juzailchees*, which was answered principally by discharges of shrapnell and round shot from the guns, the heights, too, were again crowned by the Affghan horse, but no disposition was manifested by them to encounter us in open fight, and, as the night gradually closed in, they slowly retired to the city. On this occasion about 100 of the enemy fell on the hill, while the loss on our side was 8 troopers killed, and 14 wounded.

It will be remembered that I left a six-pounder gun at the opening in the wall of the Shah Bagh. After my departure, large numbers of the enemy's infantry had filled the west end of the Shah Bagh, and, scaling up among the trees, and close to the high wall, towards the gun, kept up so hot and precise a fire as to render its removal absolutely necessary. Capt Mackenzie had been joined by a party of H. M.'s 41th, with whom, and with a few of his own men, he endeavoured to cover the operation, which was extremely difficult, it being necessary to drag the gun by hand over bad ground. Several of the Shah's gunners were killed, and many of the covering party knocked over, the gun being barely saved. I may here add, that from this time forward the *juzailchees*, under the able direction of Capt Mackenzie, who volunteered to lead them, were forward to distin-

guish themselves on all occasions, and continued to the very last a most useful part of our force.

November 8th. — An attempt was made by the enemy to mine one of the towers of the fort we captured on the 6th, which could not have happened had we taken possession of the gate of the Shah Bagh at the same time. Our chief cause of anxiety now was the empty state of our granary. Even with high bribes and liberal payment, the Envoy could only procure a scanty supply, insufficient for daily consumption, from the village of Beymaroo, about half a mile down the Kohistan road, to the north. The object of the enemy undoubtedly was to starve us out; to effect which the chiefs exerted their whole influence to prevent our being supplied from any of the neighbouring forts. Their game was a sure one; and, so long as they held firmly together, it could not fail to be sooner or later successful. During the short interval of quiet, which ensued after our capture of the fort, the rebels managed to rig out a couple of guns which they procured from the workyard of Lieut. Warburton (in charge of the Shah's guns), situated, unfortunately, in the city. These they placed in a position near Mahmood Khan's fort, opposite the south-east bastion of cantonments. All this time a cannonade was daily kept up on the town by Capt. Nicholl of the Horse

Artillery in the Bala Hissar; but, though considerable damage was thereby done, and many of the enemy killed, it required a much more powerful battery than he possessed to ruin a place of such extent. On the morning of the 2d, when the rebellion commenced, the two guns, which were sent with Campbell's Hindoostanees into the city, had been left outside the gate of the Bala Hissar in the confusion and hurry of retreat, where they had ever since remained. So jealous a watch was kept over these by the enemy from the houses of the Shah Bazar, that it was found impossible to get them back into the fort; and it was necessary for our troops to maintain an equally strict watch to prevent their being removed by the enemy, who made several desperate efforts to obtain them. An attempt of this kind took place to-day, when the rebels were driven back into the city with considerable loss.

November 9th. — The General's weak state of health rendering the presence of a coadjutor absolutely necessary, to relieve him from the command of the garrison, Brigadier Shelton, the second in command, was, at the earnest request of the Envoy, summoned in from the Bala Hissar, in the hope that, by heartily co-operating with the Envoy and General, he would strengthen their hands and

rouse the sinking confidence of the troops. He entered cantonments this morning, bringing with him 1 H. A. gun, 1 mountain train ditto, 1 company H. M. 44th, the Shah's 6th infantry, and a small supply of atta.

CHAP III

DESPONDENCY IN CANTONMENT — DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN BRIGADIER SHELTON AND SIR WILLIAM MACNAGHTEN — ANNOYANCE FROM THE FIRE OF THE ENEMY OUT OF SEVERAL FORTS. — STORMING OF THE RIKA BASREE FORT UNDER BRIGADIER SHELTON — PERILOUS SITUATION AND BRAVERY OF LIEUT BIRD — FURTHER ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE ENEMY — SUPERIORITY OF THE AFFGHANS IN THE USE OF FIRE ARMS

November 10th — HENCEFORWARD Brigadier Shelton bore a conspicuous part in the drama upon the issue of which so much depended. He had, however, from the very first, seemed to despair of the force being able to hold out the winter at Cabul, and strenuously advocated an immediate retreat to Jellalabad.

This sort of despondency proved, unhappily, very infectious. It soon spread its baneful influence among the officers, and was by them communicated to the soldiery. The number of *croakers* in garrison became perfectly frightful, lugubrious looks and dismal prophecies being encountered every where. The severe losses sustained by H. M.'s 44th under Capt Swayne, on the 4th instant, had very much discouraged the

men of that regiment; and it is a lamentable fact that some of those European soldiers, who were naturally expected to exhibit to their native brethren in arms an example of endurance and fortitude, were among the first to lose confidence and give vent to feelings of discontent at the duties imposed on them. The evil seed, once sprung up, became more and more difficult to eradicate, showing daily more and more how completely demoralising to the British soldier is the very idea of a retreat.

Sir William Macnaghten and his suite were altogether opposed to Brigadier Shelton in this matter, it being in his (the Envoy's) estimation a duty we owed the Government to retain our post, at whatsoever risk. This difference of opinion, on a question of such vital importance, was attended with unhappy results, inasmuch as it deprived the General, in his hour of need, of the strength which unanimity imparts, and produced an uncommunicative and disheartening reserve in an emergency which demanded the freest interchange of counsel and ideas.

But I am digressing. — About 9 A.M. on the 10th the enemy crowned the heights to the west in great force, and almost simultaneously a large body of horse and foot, supposed to be Giljyes, who had just arrived, made their appearance on

the Seeah Sung hills to the east, and, after firing a feu de joie, set up a loud shout, which was answered in a similar way by those on the opposite side of us. This was supposed to be a preconcerted signal for a joint attack on the cantonments. No movement was however made on the western side to molest us, but on the eastern quarter parties of the enemy, moving down into the plain, took possession of all the forts in that direction. One of these, called the Rika-hashee fort, was situated directly opposite the Mission Compound, at the north east angle of cantonments, within musket shot of our works, into which the enemy soon began to pour a very annoying fire, a party of sharp shooters at the same time, concealing themselves among the ruins of a house immediately opposite the north east bastion, took deadly aim at the European artillerymen who were working the guns, one poor fellow being shot through the temple in the act of sponging. From 2 howitzers and a 5½ inch mortar, a discharge of shells into the fort was kept up for two hours.

At this time not above two days' supply of provisions remained in garrison, and it was very clear that, unless the enemy were quickly driven out from their new possession, we should soon be completely hemmed in on all sides. At the En-

voy's urgent desire, he taking the entire responsibility on himself, the General ordered a force to hold themselves in readiness under Brigadier Shelton to storm the Rika-bashee fort. About 12 A. M. the following troops assembled at the eastern gate : — 2 H. A. guns, 1 mountain train gun, Walker's horse, H. M.'s 44th foot under Col. Mackerell, 37th N. I. under Major Griffiths, 6th regiment of Shah's force under Capt. Hopkins. The whole issued from cantonments, a storming party consisting of two companies from each regiment taking the lead, preceded by Capt. Bellew, who hurried forward to blow open the gate. Missing the gate, however, he blew open a wicket of such small dimensions as to render it impossible for more than two or three men to enter abreast, and these in a stooping posture. This, it will be seen, was one cause of discomfiture in the first instance ; for the hearts of the men failed them when they saw their foremost comrades struck down, endeavouring to force an entrance under such disadvantageous circumstances, without being able to help them. The signal, however, was given for the storming party, headed by Col. Mackerell. On nearing the wicket, the detachment encountered an excessively sharp fire from the walls, and the small passage, through which they endeavoured to rush in, merely served to ex-

pose the bravest to almost certain death from the hot fire of the defenders. Col Mackerell, however, and Lieut Bird of Shah's 6th infantry, accompanied by a handful of Europeans and a few Sepoys, forced their way in, Capt Westmacott of the 37th being shot down outside, and Capt M'Crie sabred in the entrance. The garrison, supposing that these few gallant men were backed by the whole attacking party, fled in consternation out of the gate, which was on the opposite side of the fort, and which ought to have been the point assailed. Unfortunately, at this instant a number of the Affghan cavalry charged round the corner of the fort next the wicket—the cry of "Cavalry!" was raised, a cry which too often, during our operations, paralyzed the arms of those, who e muskets and bayonets we have been accustomed to consider as more than a match for a desultory charge of irregular horsemen, the Europeans gave way simultaneously with the Sepoys—a bugler of the 6th infantry, through mistake, sounded the retreat—and it became for the time a scene of *saure qui peut*. In vain did the officers, especially Major Scott of H M's 44th, knowing the fearful predicament of his commanding officer, exhort and beseech their men to charge forward—not a soul would follow them, save a private of the 44th named Steward, who was afterwards promoted for

his solitary gallantry. Let me here do Brigadier Shelton justice: his acknowledged courage redeemed the day; for, exposing his own person to a hot fire, he stood firm amidst the crowd of fugitives, and by his exhortations and example at last rallied them; advancing again to the attack, again our men faltered, notwithstanding that the fire of the great guns from the cantonments, and that of Capt. Mackenzie's juzailchees from the N. E. angle of the Mission Compound, together with a demonstration on the part of our cavalry, had greatly abated the ardour of the Affghan horse. A third time did the Brigadier bring on his men to the assault, which now proved successful. We became masters of the fort. But what, in the mean time, had been passing inside the fort, where, it will be remembered, several of our brave brethren had been shut up, as it were, in the lions' den?

On the first retreat of our men, Lieut. Bird, with Col. Mackerell and several Europeans, had hastily shut the gate by which the garrison had for the most part evacuated the place, securing the chain with a bayonet: the repulse outside, however, encouraged the enemy to return in great numbers, and, it being impossible to remain near the gate on account of the hot fire poured in through the crevices, our few heroes speedily had

the mortification to see their foes not only re-entering the wicket, but, having drawn the bayonet, rush in with loud shouts through the now re-opened gate. Poor Mackerell, having fallen, was literally hacked to pieces, although still alive at the termination of the contest. Lieut. Bird, with two Sepoys, retreated into a stable, the door of which they closed, all the rest of the men, endeavouring to escape through the wicket, were met and slaughtered. Bird's place of concealment at first, in the confusion, escaped the observation of the temporarily triumphant Affghans, at last it was discovered, and an attack commenced at the door. Thus, being barricaded with logs of wood, and whatever else the tenants of the stable could find, resisted their efforts, while Bird and his now solitary companion, a Sepoy of the 37th N I (the other having been struck down), maintained as hot a fire as they could, each shot taking deadly effect from the proximity of the party engaged. The fall of their companions deterred the mass of the assulants from a simultaneous rush, which must have succeeded, and thus that truly chivalrous, high minded, and amiable young gentleman, whose subsequent fate must be ranked among the mysterious dispensations of Providence which we cannot for the present fathom, stood at bay with his equally brave comrade for upwards of a

quarter of an hour, when, having only five cartridges left, in spite of having rifled the pouch of the dead man, they were rescued as related above. Our troops literally found the pair "grim and lonely there," upwards of thirty of the enemy having fallen by their unassisted prowess.

Our loss on this occasion was not less than 200 killed and wounded. Four neighbouring forts were immediately evacuated by the enemy, and occupied by our troops: they were found to contain about 1400 maunds of grain; in removing which no time was lost, but as it was not found practicable to bring off more than half before night-fall, Capt. Boyd, the Assist.-Com.-Gen., requested Brig. Shelton that a guard might be thrown into a small fort, where it must be left for the night; this was, however, refused, and on the following morning, as might have been expected, the grain was all gone: permanent possession was, however, taken of the Rika-bashee and Zulfekar forts, the towers of the remainder being blown up on the following day.

Numbers of Giljie horse and foot still maintaining their position on the Seeah Sung heights, Brig. Shelton moved his force towards that quarter. On reaching the base of the hill, fire was opened from the two H. A. guns, which, with the firm front presented by our troops,

caused the enemy shortly to retire towards the city, and ere we turned homeward not a man remained in sight

November 13th The enemy appeared in great force on the western heights, where, having posted two guns, they fired into cantonments with considerable precision. At the earnest entreaty of the Envoy, it was determined that a party, under Brigadier Shelton, should sally forth to attack them and, if possible, capture their guns. The force ordered for this service was not ready until 3 P. M. It consisted of the following troops—2 squadrons 5th Light Cavalry, under Col Chambers, 1 squadron Shah's 2d Irregular Horse, under Lieut Le Geyt, 1 troop of Skinner's Horse under Lieut Walker, the Body Guard, 6 companies Her Majesty's 44th, under Major Scott, 6 companies 37th, under Major Swayne, 4 companies Shah's 6th Infantry, under Capt Hopkins, and 1 H. A. gun and 1 Mountain Train do under myself, escorted by a company of 6th Shah's under Capt Marshall. After quitting cantonments, the troops took the direction of a gorge between the two hills bounding the plain, distant about a mile (the enemy's horse crowning that to the left), and advanced in separate columns at so brisk a pace, that it seemed a race which should arrive first at the scene of action. The

infantry had actually reached the foot of the hill, and were on the point of ascending to the charge, ere the H. A. gun, which had been detained in the rear by sticking fast in a canal, could be got ready for action; nor had more than one round of grape been fired, ere the advance, led on by the gallant Major Thain, had closed upon the foe, who resolutely stood their ground on the summit of the ridge, and unflinchingly received the discharge of our musketry, which, strange to say, even at the short range of ten or twelve yards, did little or no execution! From this cause the enemy, growing bolder every moment, advanced close up to the bayonets of our infantry, upon whom they pressed so perseveringly, as to succeed in driving them backwards to the foot of the hill, wounding Major Thain on the left shoulder, and sabring several of the men. Several rounds of grape and shrapnell were now poured in, and threw them into some confusion, whereupon a timely charge of our cavalry, Anderson's horse taking the lead, drove them again up the hill, when our infantry once more advancing carried the height, the enemy retreating along the ridge, closely followed by our troops, and abandoning their guns to us. The H. A. gun now took up a position in the middle of the gorge, whence it played with effect on a large body of horse as-

sembled on the plain west of the hill, who forthwith retreated to a distance

Our troops had now got into ground where it was impracticable for Horse-Artillery to follow. I accordingly pushed forward with one artilleryman and a supply of drag-ropes and spikes, to look out for the deserted guns of the enemy, one of these, a 4-pounder, was easily removed along the ridge by a party of the Shah's 8th Infantry, but the other, a 6-pounder, was awkwardly situated in a ravine half way down the side of the hill, our troops, with the Mountain-Train 3-pounder, being drawn up along the ridge just above it. The evening was now fast closing in, and a large body of Affghan infantry occupied some enclosures on the plain below, whence they kept up so hot a fire upon the gun, as to render its removal by no means an easy task, but the Envoy having sent us a message of entreaty that no exertions might be spared to complete the triumph of the day by bringing off *both* the enemy's guns, Major Scott, of her Majesty's 44th, repeatedly called on his men to descend with him to drag the 6-pounder away, but, strange to say, his frequent appeals to their soldierly feelings were made in vain with a few gallant exceptions they remained immovable, nor could the Sepoys be induced to lead the way where their European

brethren so obstinately hung back. Meanwhile it became nearly dark, and the further detention of the troops being attended with risk, as the enemy, though driven from the hill, still maintained a threatening attitude below, I descended with the Horse Artillery gunner, and, having driven in a spike, returned to assist in making sure of the captured 4-pounder. This, from the steepness of the hill, and the numerous water-cuts which every where intersected the plain, proved a somewhat troublesome business. Lieut. Macartney, however, with a company of the Shah's 6th Infantry, urged on his men with zeal, and we at last had the satisfaction to deposit our prize safe within the cantonment gates. Meanwhile the enemy, favoured by the darkness, pressed hard upon our returning troops, and by dint of incessant firing and shouting rendered their homeward march somewhat disorderly, effecting, however, but little damage.

It was no small disadvantage under which we laboured, that no temporary success of our troops over those of the enemy could be followed up, nor even possession be retained of the ground gained by us at the point of the bayonet, owing to the necessity of withdrawing our men into their quarters at night. On reaching the cantonment, we found the garrison in a state of considerable

alarm, and a continual blaze of musketry illuminating the whole line of rampart. This had arisen from a demonstration of attack having been made by the enemy on the south-west bastion, which had been immediately checked by a few rounds of grape from the guns, and by a well directed fire from the *juzailchees* under Capt Mackenzie, but it was long ere quiet could be restored, the men continuing to discharge their pieces at they knew not what.

Our infantry soldiers, both European and Native, might have taken a salutary lesson from the Affghans in the use of their fire arms, the latter invariably taking steady deliberate aim, and seldom throwing away a single shot, whereas our men seemed to fire entirely at random, without any aim at all, hence the impunity with which the Affghin horsemen braved the discharge of our musketry in this day's action within twelve yards, not one shot, to all appearance, taking effect. In this affair Capt Paton, Assist.-Quart.-Mast-Gen, had the misfortune to receive a wound in the left arm, which rendered amputation necessary, and the valuable services of one of our most efficient staff officers were thus lost. This was the last success our arms were destined to experience. Henceforward it becomes my weary task to relate a catalogue of errors, disasters, and

difficulties, which, following close upon each other, disgusted our officers, disheartened our soldiers, and finally sunk us all into irretrievable ruin, as though Heaven itself, by a combination of evil circumstances for its own inscrutable purposes, had planned our downfall. But here it is fit I should relate the scenes that had all this while been enacting at our solitary outpost in Kohistan.

CHAP IV

EVENTS IN KOHISTAN, AS RELATED BY MAJOR POTTINGER
—TREACHERY OF THE NIJBOW CHIEFS —MURDER OF
LIEUT RATTRAY —GALLANTRY OF LIEUT HAUGHTON
—ATTACK BY THE ENEMY ON THE CHAREKAR CAN-
TONMENT —MAJOR POTTINGER WOUNDED — DEATH OF
CAPT CODRINGTON —DEPLORABLE SCARCITY OF WATER
— DISAPPEARANCE OF DR GRANT —RETREAT TO
WARDS CABUL — PERILS OF MAJOR POTTINGER AND
LIEUT HAUGHTON —THEY ESCAPE TO CANTONMENT

ON the 15th November, Major Pottinger, C B. and Lieut Haughton, Adj't of the Shah's 4th, or Goorkha regiment, came in from Charekar, both severely wounded, the former in the leg, and the latter having had his right hand amputated, besides several cuts in the neck and left arm. Their escape was wonderful.

The following is an outline of what had taken place in Kohistan, from the commencement of the insurrection up to the present date.

It appears, from Major Pottinger's account of the transactions of that period, that it was not without reason he had so urgently applied to Sir William Macnaghten for reinforcements. Towards the end of October, premonitory signs of

the coming tempest had become so unequivocally threatening as to confirm Major Pottinger in his worst suspicions, and in his conviction that order could not possibly be restored without a departure on the part of government from the long-suffering system which had been obstinately pursued with respect to Nijrow in particular; but his conviction alone could do little to stem the torrent of coming events.

About this time Meer Musjeedee, a contumacious rebel against the Shah's authority, who had been expelled from Kohistan during General Sale's campaign in that country in 1840, and who had taken refuge in Nijrow after the fashion of many other men of similar stamp, obstinately refusing to make his submission to the Shah even upon the most favourable terms, openly put himself at the head of a powerful and well-organised party, with the avowed intention of expelling the Feringees and overturning the existing government. He was speedily joined by the most influential of the Nijrow chiefs. A few of these made their appearance before Lughmanee, where Major Pottinger resided, and proffered their services towards the maintenance of the public tranquillity. It will be seen that their object was the blackest treachery.

I shall here relate Major Pottinger's story, almost in his own words, as given to me

In the course of the forenoon of the 3d of November, Major Pottinger had an interview with a number of the more influential chiefs in his house or fort, and, about noon, went into the garden to receive those of inferior rank, accompanied by his visitors here they were joined by Lieut Charles Rattray, Major Pottinger's Assistant In discussing the question of the rewards to which their services might entitle them, the head men declared that, although *they* were willing to agree to Major Pottinger's propositions, they could not answer for their clansmen, and the above mentioned petty chiefs, who were awaiting the expected conference at some little distance Mr Rattray, accordingly, in company with several of the principal, joined the latter, and, shortly after, proceeded with them to an adjoining field, where numbers of their armed retainers were assembled, for the purpose of ascertaining their sentiments on the subject of the conference While thus engaged, this most promising and brave young officer apparently became aware of intended foul play, and turned to leave the field, when he was immediately shot down At this time Major Pottinger was still sitting in his garden, in company with several of the above-

mentioned chiefs, and had just received intelligence of the purposed treachery from Mahomed Kasim Khan, a debashee of Hazirbash, a small detachment of which composed a part of his escort: he had with difficulty comprehended the man's meaning, which was conveyed by hints, when the sound of firing was heard:—the chiefs that were with him rose and fled, and he escaped into the fort by the postern gate; which having secured, he, from the terre-plein of the rampart, saw poor Mr. Rattray lying badly wounded in the field at the distance of some 300 yards, and the late pretended negotiators making off in all directions with the plunder of the camp of the Hazirbash detachment. Of these plunderers a party passing close to Mr. Rattray, and observing that life was not extinct, one of them put his gun close to his head, and blew his brains out,—several others discharging their pieces into different parts of his body.

Major Pottinger's guard, being by this time on the alert, opened a fire, which speedily cleared the open space; but the enemy, seeking shelter in the numerous watercourses, and under the low walls surrounding the fort, harassed them incessantly until the appearance of Lieut. Haughton, adjutant of the Goorkha regiment, who, advancing from Charekar, where the corps was cantoned, distant,

about three miles, speedily drove the assailants from their cover. Capt Codrington, who commanded the regiment, chanced to be in Lughmanee at this very time, and, on Mr. Haughton's approach, he led out a sortie and joined him the skirmish was sharp, and the enemy suffered severely, Capt. Codrington remaining in possession of an adjacent canal, the bank of which was immediately cut, to supply the tank of the fort with water in case of accidents

The evening had now closed in, and the enemy had retired, taking up a position which seemed to threaten the Charekar road. Capt Codrington accordingly left Lughmanee in haste, strengthening Major Pottinger's party to about 100 men, these having to garrison four small forts. He promised, however, to relieve them the next morning, and to send a further supply of ammunition, of which there only remained 1500 rounds. Capt Codrington reached Charekar unmolested, and the enemy, returning to their former point of attack, carried off their dead with impunity, the garrison being too weak to make a sally. On the morning of the 4th, Capt. Codrington despatched four companies with a six-pounder gun, according to promise. Their march caused numbers of the enemy now assembled on all sides to retreat, but one large body remained in position on the skirts

of the mountain range to their right, and threatened their flank. Mr. Haughton, who commanded, detached Ensign Salisbury with a company to disperse them, which, in spite of the disparity of numbers, was effected in good style. Unhappily the Goorkhas, being young soldiers, and flushed with success, pressed forward in pursuit with too much eagerness, regardless of the recalling bugle, when at last Mr. Salisbury with difficulty halted them, and endeavoured to retrace his steps. The enemy, observing the error they had committed in separating themselves too far from their main body, rallied and followed them in their retreat so closely, as to oblige Mr. Salisbury to halt his little band frequently, and face about. Mr. Haughton, consequently, in order to extricate the compromised company, halted his convoy, and despatched the greatest part of his men in the direction of the skirmish. All this encouraged the other parties of the enemy who had retired to return, against whom, in numbers not less than 4000 men, Mr. Haughton maintained his ground until rejoined by his subaltern, when, seeing the hopelessness of making good his way to Lughmanee, he retreated, and regained in safety the fortified barracks at Charekar. Many of the men fell in this expedition, which would have proved infinitely more disastrous, from the number of the

enemy's cavalry, who latterly seemed to gain confidence at every stage, but for the extraordinary gallantry and conduct of Mr. Haughton, who, with a handful of men and a gun, protected the rear of our over-matched troops. Mr. Salisbury was mortally wounded, and the trail of the gun gave way just as the party reached Charekar.

This disappointment led Major Pottinger to believe that no second attempt would be made to relieve them; and as he had no ammunition beyond the supply in the men's pouches, he determined to retreat on Charekar after dark: the better to hide his intention, he ordered grain to be brought into the fort. Meantime the Charekar cantonment was attacked on all sides, and in the afternoon large bodies of the enemy were detached thence, and, joining others from that part of the valley, recommenced their investment of Lughmanee. That part of the Major's garrison which occupied the small fort to the east of the principal one, defended by himself, although their orders were not to vacate their posts until after dark, being panic-stricken, did so at once, gaining the stronger position, but leaving behind several wounded comrades and their havildar, who remained staunch to his duty: these, however, were brought off. Major Pottinger then strengthened the garrison of a cluster of adjacent huts, which, being

surrounded by a sort of rude fortification, formed a tolerably good out-work; but the want of European officers to control the men was soon lamentably apparent, and in a short time the Goorkhas, headed by their native officer, abandoned the hamlet, followed as a matter of course by the few Affghan soldiers attached to Capt. Codrington's person, who had remained faithful until then. This last misfortune gave the enemy cover up to the very gate of the main stronghold, and before dark they had succeeded in getting possession of a gun-shed built against its outer wall, whence they commenced mining.

As soon as night had fairly closed in, Major Pottinger drew together the Goorkha garrison outside the postern gate, under pretence of making a sortie, and thus separated them from the Affghans and their followers, who remained inside; he then marched for Charekar, the garrison of the remaining fort joining him as he drew on; he passed by the investing posts in perfect silence, taking his route along the skirts of the mountains to avoid the main road, and arrived in safety at Charekar. In Lughmanee he abandoned the hostages whom he had taken from the Kohistan chiefs, two boxes of treasure containing 2000 rupees, about sixty stand of juzails, all his office records, Mr. Rattray's, Dr. Grant's, and his own personal property, and a

number of horses belonging to himself and the above-mentioned two officers, and to some horsemen who had not deserted — for the greater part of his mounted escort had fled in the beginning of the affray. The Heratees, and seven or eight Peshawarees, were the only Affghins who adhered to him the Cabulees, had deserted to a man, immediately on the murder of Mr Rattray, they had been much disgusted the preceding month, as well as their comrades who proved unfaithful too, by the sudden reduction of a portion of his escort, which naturally led them to apprehend that their livelihood from the British service was of a precarious nature

On the morning of 5th Nov large bodies of the enemy closed in round the Charekar barracks, and about 7 o'clock they attacked the outposts with a spirit engendered by the success of the preceding evening. Capt Codrington requested Major Pottinger to take charge of what artillery he had, and to move a squadron in support of the skirmishers, which he did. The skirmishers were driven in, and, while retreating, Major Pottinger was wounded in the leg by a musket-shot. Encouraged by this, and by the unfinished state of the works round the barracks, in the entrance of which there was no gate, the enemy advanced with great determination to the attack, and dis-

lodged the Goorkhas from some mud huts outside, which were still occupied by a part of the regiment. In this affair Capt. Codrington, an officer of whose merits it is difficult to speak too highly, fell mortally wounded. The main post was, however, successfully defended, and the enemy driven back with considerable loss; upon which Mr. Haughton (who had now succeeded to the command, the only remaining officer being Mr. Rose, a mere youth,) made a sortie and drove the enemy out of the gardens occupied by them in the morning, maintaining his ground against their most desperate efforts until after dark. Relief was then sent to the garrison (consisting of about 50 men) of Khaja Meer's fort, which it had been found expedient to occupy previously, because it commanded the interior of the barraeks on the southern side.

From this time the unfortunate horses and cattle of the garrison were obliged to endure the extremity of thirst, there being *no* water for *them*, and the supply for even the fighting men scanty in the extreme, obtained only from a few pools in the ditch of the rampart, which had been formed by a seasonable fall of rain. During the 6th the enemy renewed their attack in augmented numbers, the whole population of the country ap-

parently swarming to the scene of action. Notwithstanding two successful sorties, all the outposts were driven in by dark, and thenceforth the garrison was confined to the barrack itself.

On the 7th the enemy got possession of Khoja Meer's fort. the regimental moonshee had been gained over, and through him the native officer was induced to surrender. From the towers of that fort, on the 8th, the enemy offered terms, on the condition that all the infidels should embrace Mahomedanism. Major Pottinger replied, that they had come to aid a Mahomedan sovereign in the recovery of his rights, that they consequently were within the pale of Islam, and exempt from coercion on the score of religion. The enemy rejoined, that the King himself had ordered them to attack the Kaffirs, and wished to know if Major Pottinger would yield on receiving an order. He refused to do so, except on the production of a written document. All this time the garrison was sorely galled from the post of vantage in possession of the enemy.

On the 9th, the enemy were enabled by the carelessness of the guard to blow up a part of the south-west tower of the barracks, but, before they could profit by the breach and the panic of the men, Mr. Haughton rallied the fugitives, and,

leading them back, secured the top of the parapet wall with a barricade of boards and sand-bags.

On the 10th, the officers drew their last pool of water, and served out *half a wineglass* to each fighting man.

On the 11th, all could not share even in that miserable proportion, and their sufferings from thirst were dreadful. During the night a sortie was made, and some of the followers brought in a little water from a distant place, the sight of which only served to aggravate the distress of the majority ; still, however, the fortitude of these brave and hardy soldiers remained unshaken, although apathy, the result of intense suffering, especially among Hindoos, began to benumb their faculties.

On the 12th, after dark, Mr. Haughton ordered out a party to cover the water-carriers in an attempt to obtain a supply ; but the over-harassed Sepoys, unable to restrain themselves, dashed out of the ranks on approaching the coveted element, instead of standing to their arms to repel the enemy, and, consequently, the expedition failed in its object. Another sortie, consisting of two companies under Ensign Rose, was then ordered out, one of which, having separated from the other, dispersed in search of water ; that under Mr. Rose

himself fell on a post of the besiegers, every man of which they bayoneted, but, being unaccountably struck with a panic, the men fled back to the harracks, leaving Mr Rose almost alone, who was then obliged to return, having accomplished his object but partially. These circumstances were communicated by Mr Haughton to Major Pottinger (whose wound had disabled him from active bodily co operation in these last events), together with the startling intelligence, that the corps was almost wholly disorganised from the large amount of killed and wounded, the hardships it had undergone, the utter inefficiency of the native officers, who had no sort of control over the soldiers, the exhaustion of the men from constant duty, and the total want of water and provisions.

Relief from Cabul, for which Major Pottinger had written repeatedly, seemed now hopeless, and an attempt at protracted defence of the post appeared likely to ensure the destruction of its brave defenders. Major Pottinger considered that the only remaining chance of saving any portion of the regiment was a retreat to Cabul, and, although that was abundantly perilous, he entertained a hope that a few of the most active men who were not encumbered with wives and children might escape. Then was felt, most bit

terly, the impolicy of the encouragement which had been held out to all the recruits to bring their families with them, on what, even at the time of their being raised, was looked on by the most able officers as likely to prove a campaign of several years. Mr. Haughton coincided in the Major's views, and it was agreed, to ensure secrecy, that the men should not be informed of their intentions until paraded for the march.

This wretched state of things continued until the afternoon of the 13th, when Mr. Haughton discovered amongst the Punjabee artillerymen two who had deserted a few days previously, and who apparently had returned for the purpose of seducing their comrades. He immediately seized them ; but, while he was in the act of their apprehension, the jemadar of the artillery, himself a Punjabee Mussulman, snatched a sword from a bystander, and cut down that officer, repeating his blows as he lay on the ground. Before the astonished Goorkhas could draw their knives or handle their muskets, this miscreant, followed by all the artillerymen and the greater number of the Mahomedans in the barracks, rushed out of the gate and escaped. The tumult and confusion occasioned by this impressed Major Pottinger with the idea that the enemy had driven the men

from the walls, under this impression, he caused himself to be carried to the main gate, but on his arrival he found that Dr Grant had secured that point, and rallied the men. The native officers immediately gathered round him, with many of the Sepoys, to assert their fidelity, but demoralization had evidently progressed fearfully, as may be judged from the fact that the garrison had plundered the treasure and the quarters of the deceased Capt. Codrington the instant the Major had left them, and that in the face of the enemy's fire they had pulled down the officers boxes, which had been piled up as traverses to protect the doorway, broken them open, and pillaged them. Dr Grant then amputated Mr Haughton's right hand, and hastily dressed the severe wounds which he had received in his left arm and on his neck. In the evening the doctor spiked all the guns with his own hands, and the garrison then left the barracks by the postern gate. The advance was led by Major Pottinger (Mr Haughton, who accompanied him, being unable to do more than sit passively on his horse), Dr Grant brought out the main body, and Ensign Rose, with the Quart Master Serjt, commanded the rear.

Notwithstanding the previous sufferings of these unfortunate men, it may be said that here com

menced their real disasters. In vain did Major Pottinger attempt to lead his men to seize a building generally occupied by the enemy after night-fall, by the possession of which the exit of the main body from the barracks might be covered. In fact, it was with much difficulty that he eventually succeeded in halting them at about half a mile from the barracks until the main body and rear should close up. The men were naturally occupied entirely with their families, and such property as it had been impossible to prevent their bringing away ; and discipline, the only source of hope under such circumstances, was at an end.

After the junction of the main body and rear, Dr. Grant suddenly disappeared, and was not afterwards seen.

The regiment then proceeded along the road to Sinjit Durrah, where Major Pottinger knew that water could be procured. On reaching the first stream, the last remnant of control over this disorderly mob was lost ; much delay took place, and, in moving on, the advance became suddenly separated from the main body. After an anxious search Major Pottinger effected a rejunction.

At Sinjit Durrah they quitted the road to avoid alarming the villages and any outposts that might be stationed there ; and much time was lost in

regaining the track from the other side : at Istalif the same manœuvre was practised. Major Pottinger now found very few inclined to push on ; exhaustion from the pain of his wound precluded the possibility of his being of any further use as a leader ; and he determined to push on with Mr. Haughton towards Cabul, although with faint hope that the strength of either would prove adequate to the exertion. Having no guide, they got into many difficulties ; and day was breaking by the time they reached the range of mountains half way between Charekar and Cabul. Men and horses were by this time incapable of further endurance : the latter, it must be remembered, had been ten days without water previously to starting, and five days without food ; they were still upwards of twenty miles from any place of safety ; their sufferings from their wounds, fatigue, hunger, and thirst, made life a burden, and at this time despair had almost obtained a victory — but God sustained them. By Mr. Haughton's advice they sought shelter in a very deep but dry ravine, close to a small village, hoping that their proximity to danger might prove a source of safety ; as it was probable that the inhabitants, who by this time must have been on the alert, would scarcely think of looking for their prey close to their own doors. The companions of Major Pottinger and Mr.

Haughton were a sepoy of the regiment, a moon-shee, and the regimental *buniah*. In the forenoon they were alarmed by a firing on the mountains above them; the cause of this, as it appeared afterwards, was that a few of the fugitive Goorkhas had ascended the hills for safety (which, indeed, it was Major Pottinger's wish to do, until he yielded to the arguments of his companion), whither they were pursued and massacred by the country people. The rest of the day passed in tranquillity; and again, under the friendly shroud of darkness, having previously calculated their exact position, did this sorely-bested little party resume their dangerous route. It was providential that Major Pottinger had, from his habits as a traveller through unknown and difficult regions, accustomed himself to ascertain and remember the bearings of the most conspicuous landmarks of the countries he traversed; it was therefore comparatively easy for him to lead the way over the steep and rugged peaks, by which alone they might hope to find a safe path,—for the main road, and even the more accessible tracks across the tops of the mountains, were closely beset, and watch-fires gleamed in all directions. Indeed Gholam-Moyun-ood-deer, a distinguished partizan in the service of the rebels, had been despatched from Cabul, with a number of his most active

followers, purposely to intercept and seize the Major, of whose flight intelligence had been early received, and actually was at that time patrolling those very heights over which the fugitives passed. But the protecting hand of Providence was displayed not only in leading them unharmed through the midst of their enemies, but in supplying them with mental fortitude and bodily strength. Weak and exhausted, their hardy and usually sure-footed Toorkman horses could scarcely strain up the almost impracticable side of the mountain, or preserve their equilibrium in the sharp sudden descents which they encountered, for path there was none. On one occasion Mr. Haughton, whose desperate wounds I have already described, fell off, and, being unable to rise, declared his determination of awaiting his fate where he lay. The Major refused to desert him, and both slept for about one hour, when, nature being a little restored, they pushed on until they descended into the plain of Alifat, which they crossed, avoiding the fort of that name, and, struggling up the remaining ridge that separated them from the plain of Cabul, they entered it by the southern end of the Cabul lake. Intending now to cross the cultivation, and to reach cantonments by the back of the Shah's garden, Major Pottinger missed his road close to Kila-i-bolund, and found

himself within the enemy's sentries; but being unwilling to alarm them by retracing his steps, after discovering his mistake, he led the way towards Deh Affghan. Here they were challenged by various outposts, to whom they answered after the fashion of Affghan horsemen; but they were compelled, in order to avoid suspicion, actually to enter the city of Cabul, their only hope now being in the slumberous security of the inhabitants at that hour (it being now about 3 A. M.), and in the protection of their Affghan dress and equipments. The Goorkha sepoy, who, strange to say, had kept up with them *on foot*, had *his* outward man concealed by a large *postheen*, or sheep-skin cloak. They pursued their way through the lanes and bazar of the city, without any interruption, except the occasional gruff challenge of a sleepy watchman, until they gained the skirts of the city. There they were like to have been stopped by a picket which lay between them and the cantonment. The disposition to a relaxation of vigilance as the morning approaches, which marks the Affghan soldier, again befriended them; they had nearly passed the post before they were pursued. Desperation enabled them to urge their wearied horses into a pace which barely gave them the advantage over their enemies, who were on foot; and they escaped with a volley from the

now aroused picket, the little Goorkha freshening his way in the most surprising manner, considering his previous journey. A few hundred yards further brought them within the ramparts of our cantonment, where they were received by their brethren in arms as men risen from the dead.

CHAP. V.

REMOVAL FROM CANTONMENT TO BALA HISSAR DISCUSSED.—
 THE IDEA ABANDONED.—GENERAL SALE'S RETURN IMPRACTICABLE.—MAHMOOD KHAN'S FORT—ANNOYANCE FROM IT—BUT LEFT IN ENEMY'S POSSESSION.—LETTER FROM THE ENVOY TO THE GENERAL.—UNPROFITABLE OPERATIONS AT THE VILLAGE OF BEYNAROO.—ARRIVAL OF MAHOMED AKBER KHAN AT CABUL.

November 16th.—THE impression made on the enemy by the action of the 13th was so far salutary, that they did not venture to annoy us again for several days. Advantage was taken of this respite to throw magazine supplies from time to time into the Bala Hissar, a duty which was ably performed by Lieut. Walker, with a resalah of irregular horse under cover of night. But even in this short interval of comparative rest, such was the wretched construction of the cantonment, that the mere ordinary routine of garrison duty, and the necessity of closely manning our long line of rampart both by day and night, was a severe trial to the health and patience of the troops; especially now that the winter began to

show symptoms of unusual severity. There seemed, indeed, every probability of an early fall of snow, to which all looked forward with dread, as the harbinger of fresh difficulties and of augmented suffering.

These considerations, and the manifest superiority of the Bala Hissar as a military position, led to the early discussion of the expediency of abandoning the cantonment and consolidating our forces in the above-mentioned stronghold. The Envoy himself was, from the first, greatly in favour of this move, until overruled by the many objections urged against it by the military authorities; to which, as will be seen by a letter from him presently quoted, he learned by degrees to attach some weight himself; but to the very last it was a measure that had many advocates, and I venture to state my own firm belief that, had we at this time moved into the Bala Hissar, Cabul would have been still in our possession. The chief objections urged were, 1st, the difficulty of conveying our sick and wounded; 2dly, the want of firewood; 3dly, the want of forage for the cavalry; 4thly, the triumph that our abandonment of cantonments would afford the enemy; 5thly, the risk of defeat on the way thither. On the other hand it was advanced, 1st, that, though to carry the sick would be *difficult*, it still was not *impossible*; for

so short a distance two, or even three, men could be conveyed on each doolie; some might manage to walk, and the rest could be mounted on the yaboos and camels, on top of their loads; 2dly, although wood was scarce in the Bala Hissar, there was enough for purposes of cooking, and for the want of fires the troops would be amply compensated by the comparative ease and comfort they would enjoy in other respects; 3dly, the horses must, in the case of there being no forage, have been shot; but the want of cavalry would have been little felt in such a situation; 4thly, as we should have destroyed all that was valuable before leaving, the supposed triumph of the enemy would have been very short-lived, and would soon have given way to a feeling of disappointment at the valueless nature of their acquisition, and of dismay at the strength and security of our new position; 5thly, the distance did not exceed two miles, and one half of that distance was protected by the guns of the Bala Hissar. If we had occupied the Seeah Sung hills with a strong party, placing guns there to sweep the plain on the cantonment side, the enemy could have done little to impede our march, without risking a battle with our whole force in a fair field, to which they were generally averse, but which would, perhaps, have been the *best* mode for *us* of deciding the struggle.

To remove so large a force, clogged with so many thousands of camp followers, without loss of some kind, was, of course, next to impossible; but ought such considerations to have interfered with a step which would have been attended in the long run with such great military and political advantages? Our troops, once collected in the Bala Hissar, could have been spared for offensive operations against the city and the neighbouring forts, by which means plenty of food and forage would in all probability have been readily procured, while the commanding nature of the position would have caused the enemy to despair of driving us out, and a large party would probably have been ere long formed in our favour. Such were the chief arguments employed on either side; but Brigadier Shelton having firmly set his face against the movement from the first moment of its proposition, all serious idea of it was gradually abandoned, though it continued to the very last a subject of common discussion.

November 18th.—Accounts were this day received from Jellalabad, that Gen. Sale, having sallied from the town, had repulsed the enemy with considerable loss. At the beginning of the insurrection, Gen. Sale's brigade was at Gundamuk; and I have already mentioned, that an order recalling it to Cabul was immediately despatched by the

Envoy. Gen. Sale, on receipt of it, summoned a council of war, by whom it was unanimously agreed to be impracticable to obey the order. The circumstances of his march to Jellalabad are already well known to the public. The hope of his return had tended much to support our spirits; our disappointment was therefore great to learn that all expectation of aid from that quarter was at an end. Our eyes were now turned towards the Candahar force as our last resource, though an advance from that quarter seemed scarcely practicable so late in the year.

Much discussion took place this evening regarding the expediency of taking Mahmood Khan's fort. There were many reasons to urge in favour of making the attempt. It was one of the chief resorts of the rebels during the day, and they had established a battery of two guns under the walls, from which they constantly fired upon our foraging parties, and upon the south-east bastion of cantonments. It was about 900 yards distant from our rampart, which was too far for breaching with the 9-pounders; but a dry canal, which ran towards it in a zigzag direction, afforded facilities for a regular approach within 300 yards, of which advantage might have been taken to enable the artillery to make a breach. Secondly, this fort commanded the road all the way up to the Bala

Hissar, and the possession of it would at once have secured to us an easy communication with that place, and with the city. Thirdly, the Envoy declared his opinion that the moral effect derived from its possession would be more likely to create a diversion in our favour than any other blow we could strike, as the Affghans had always attached great importance to its occupation. These considerations had decided the General in favour of making the attempt this very night, by blowing open the gate, and a storming party was actually warned for the duty, when Lieut. Sturt, the engineer officer, raising some sudden objection, the plan was given up, and never afterwards resumed by the military. It was, however, the cause of no small astonishment to the officers in the Bala Hissar, who, from their commanding situation, could observe all that took place on both sides, that Mahmood Khan's fort should have been suffered to remain in the hands of the enemy, though at night it was often garrisoned by a mere handful of men. This fort, nevertheless, gave abundant occupation to the artillery, who, when nothing else was going on, were frequently employed in disturbing the enemy in that quarter with one of the iron 9-pounders, and an occasional shelling from the mortar.

November 19th.—A letter was this day received

by the General from the Envoy to the following effect : — “ That, all hope of assistance from Jellalabad being over, it behoved us to take our future proceedings into consideration. He himself conceived it our imperative duty to hold on as long as possible in our present position, and he thought we might even struggle through the whole winter by making the Mahomedans and Christians live chiefly upon flesh, supposing our supplies of grain to fail ; by which means, as the essentials of wood and water were abundant, he considered our position might be rendered impregnable. A retreat towards Jellalabad would seem not only with disaster, but dishonour, and ought not to be contemplated until the very last extremity. In eight or ten days we should be better able to judge whether such extremity should be resorted to. In that case, we should have to sacrifice not only the valuable property of Government, but his majesty Shah Shoojah, to support whose authority we were employed by Government ; and even were we to make good our retreat to Jellalabad, we should have no shelter for our troops, and our camp followers would all be sacrificed. He had frequently thought of negotiating, but there was no party of sufficient power and influence to protect us. Another alternative would be to throw ourselves into the Bala Hissar ; but

he feared that would be also a disastrous retreat, to effect which much property must be necessarily sacrificed. Our heavy guns might be turned against us, and food and fuel might be scarce, for a further supply of which we might be dependent on sorties into the city, in which, if beaten, we must of course be ruined. On the whole, he was decidedly of opinion that we should hold out; it was still possible that reinforcements might arrive from Candahar, or something might turn up in our favour; there were hopes, too, that, on the setting in of winter, the enemy would disperse. He had been long disposed to recommend a blow being struck to retrieve our fortunes, such as taking Mahmood Khan's fort; but he had since reason to believe this would not answer. In eight or ten days, he concluded, it would remain for the military authorities to determine whether there was any chance of improving our position, and to decide whether it would be more prudent to attempt a retreat to Jellalabad, or to the Bala Hissar. If provision sufficient for the winter could be procured, on no account would he leave the cantonment."

November 22d.—The village of Beymaroo (or "*husbandless*," from a beautiful virgin who was buried there) was situated about half a mile to the north of cantonments, on the Kohistan road,

at the north-east extremity of a hill which bounded the plain to the west. As it was built on a slope, and within musket-shot, the upper houses commanded a large portion of the Mission Compound. From this village we for a long time drew supplies, the Envoy largely bribing the proprietor, to which, however, the enemy in some measure put a stop by taking possession of it every day. This morning, large bodies of Affghan horse and foot, having again issued from the city, proceeded to crown the summit of the above-mentioned hill. It was determined, at the recommendation of the Envoy, to send a party of our troops to forestall the enemy in the occupation of the village; and Major Swayne, 5th N. I., was appointed to that duty, with a detachment composed as follows:—a Wing 5th N. I., 2 Resallas Irregular Horse, 1 Resalla 5th Light Cavalry, and one Mountain-train gun. The party had already reached the village, when it was deemed proper to send after it a Horse Artillery gun, which I was requested by the General to accompany. Major Swayne, however, it would seem by his own account, found the village already occupied by a body of Kohistanees, and the entrance blocked up in such a manner that he considered it out of his power to force a

passage. On arriving at the place with the H. A. gun, I found him in an orchard on the road-side, the trees of which partially protected the men from a very sharp fire, poured in amongst them from the houses. There being no shelter for the gun here, nor any mode of employing it to advantage, it was ordered to cross some fields to the right, and take up a position where it could best fire upon the village, and upon the heights above it, which were now crowded with the enemy's infantry. In order to protect the horses, I drew up the gun near the fort of Zoolfa Khan, under the walls of which they had shelter; but for the gun itself no other position could be found than in the open field, where it was exposed to the full fire of the enemy posted in the village and behind the neighbouring walls. The Mountain-train gun was also with me, and both did some execution among the people on the summit of the hill, though to little purpose.

Major Swayne, whose orders were to storm the village, would neither go forward nor retire; but, concealing his men under the cover of some low wall, he all day long maintained an useless fire on the houses of Beymaroo, without the slightest satisfactory result. The cavalry were drawn up in rear of the gun on the open plain, as a conspicuous mark for the Kohistanecs, and where,

as there was nothing for them to do, they accordingly did nothing. Thus we remained for five or six hours, during which time the artillery stood exposed to the deliberate aim of the numerous marksmen who occupied the village and its immediate vicinity, whose bullets continually sang in our ears, often striking the gun, and grazing the ground on which we stood. Only two gunners, however, out of six were wounded, but the cavalry in our rear had many casualties both among men and horses.

Late in the evening, a party of Affghan horse, moving round from behind Beymaroo, proceeded towards a fort in our rear, whence a cross fire was opened upon us. Brigadier Shelton now joined, bringing with him a reinforcement from the 5th N. I., under Col. Oliver. Major Swayne, with two companies, was then sent to reconnoitre the fort whence the fire proceeded, and the H. A. gun was at the same time moved round, so as to bear upon the Affghan cavalry, who hovered among the trees in the same quarter. While engaged in this operation, I received a bullet through the left hand, which for the present terminated my active services. Shortly after this the troops were recalled into cantonments.

It is worthy of note, that Mahomed Akber

Khan, second son of the late Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan, arrived in Cabul this night from Bameean. This man was destined to exercise an evil influence over our future fortunes. The crisis of our struggle was already nigh at hand.

CHAP. VI.

A SECOND EXPEDITION TO BEYMAROO. — INCREASING NUMBERS AND VIGILANCE OF THE ENEMY. — OUR FORCE DRIVEN BACK WITH SEVERE LOSS. — OBSERVATIONS.

November 23d. — THIS day decided the fate of the Cabul force. At a council held at the General's house on the night of the 22d it was determined, on the special recommendation of the Envoy, that, in consequence of the inconvenience sustained by the enemy so frequently taking possession of Beymaroo, and interrupting our foraging parties, a force, under Brigadier Shelton, should on the following morning take the village by assault, and maintain the hill above it against whatever number of the enemy might appear. Accordingly, at 2 A. M. the under-mentioned troops* moved out of cantonments in perfect silence by the Kohistan

- * 1 H. A. gun, under Sergt. Mulhal.
- 5 Cos. H. M. 44th, under Capt. Leighton.
- 6 Cos. 5th N. I., under Lieut.-Col. Oliver.
- 6 Cos. 37th N. I., under Major Kershaw, H. M. 13th.
- Sappers, 100 men, under Lieut. Laing.
- 1 Squadron 5th Lt. Cav., under Capt. Bott.
- 1 Ditto Irregular Horse, under Lieut. Walker.
- 100 men, Anderson's Horse.

gate, and skirting the musjed immediately opposite, which was held by a company of Her Majesty's 44th, took the direction of the gorge at the further extremity of the Beymaroo hill, which they ascended, dragging the gun to the top with great difficulty, from the rugged and steep nature of the side, which labour was greatly facilitated by the exertions of 200 commissariat surwoons, who had volunteered for the occasion. The whole force then moved to the knoll at the N E extremity of the hill, which overhung the village of Beymaroo. The gun was placed in position commanding an enclosure in the village, which, from its fires, was judged to be the principal bivouac of the enemy, and a sharp fire of grape commenced, which evidently created great confusion, but it was presently answered by a discharge of juzails, the enemy forsaking the open space, and covering themselves in the houses and towers. To this we replied in the intervals of the cannonade by discharges of musketry. It was suggested by Capt Bellew and others to Brigadier Shelton to storm the village, while the evident panic of the enemy lasted, under cover of the darkness, there being no moon. To this the Brigadier did not accede.

When the day broke, parties of the enemy were descried hurrying from the village, and taking across the plain towards the distant fort, their fire

having previously slackened from the failure of their ammunition. At this time, certainly, not above 40 men remained in the village. A storming party, consisting of 2 companies 37th N. I. and some Europeans, under Majors Swayne and Kershaw, were ordered to carry the village; but Major Swayne, taking a wrong direction, missed the principal entrance, which was open, and arrived at a small *kirkhee*, or wicket, which was barricaded, and which he had no means of forcing, so that he was obliged to cover himself and his men as well as he could from the sure aim of the enemy's marksmen, by whose fire his party suffered considerably, himself being shot through the neck.

After remaining thus for about half an hour, he was recalled by the Brigadier, who observed large bodies of armed men pouring out from the city towards the scene of conflict. Meanwhile Lieut. Walker had been directed to lead his irregular horse down into the plain on the west side of the hill, to cut off such fugitives from the village as he might be able to intercept, and to cover himself from the fire of infantry under the walls of an old fort not far from the base of the hill. Brigadier Shelton, leaving three companies of the 37th N. I. in the knoll above Beymaroo as a reserve, under

Major Kershaw, moved back with the troops and guns to the part of the hill which overlooked the gorge.

Shortly after this it was suggested to raise a *sunga*, or stone breastwork, for the protection of the troops wholly exposed to the distant fire of the enemy's juzails; but this proposition was not acted on. Immense numbers of the enemy, issuing from the city, had now crowned the summits of the hill opposite the gorge,—in all, probably 10,000 men. The plain on the west of the two hills was swept by swarms of their cavalry, who evidently designed to cut off the small party of Irregular Horse under Lieut. Walker; while the failure of our attempt to storm the village had rendered it easy for the enemy to throw strong reinforcements into it, and to supply the ammunition of which they had been in great want.

About 7 A. M., the fire from the enemy's hill was so galling, that the few skirmishers sent to the brow of our hill could with difficulty retain their posts. As an instance of the backwardness which now began to develop itself among our men, it must be mentioned, that Lieut.-Col. Oliver endeavoured to induce a party of his own regiment to follow him to the brow of the hill, to keep down the sharp fire of a number of the enemy, who had ensconced themselves in a small

ravine commanding the foremost square; not a man would follow him, — and it was only after that brave officer had gone forward himself into the thickest of the fire, saying, “Although my men desert me, I myself will do my duty,” that about a dozen were shamed into performing theirs. The remainder of the troops (the infantry formed into two squares, and the cavalry being drawn up *en masse* immediately in their rear) suffered severely, without being able to retaliate, from the comparatively short range of the musket. Our single gun maintained as hot a fire on the masses of the enemy as possible, doing great execution; but the want of a second gun to take up the fire was sensibly felt, inasmuch as, after a short time, the vent became too hot for the artillerymen to serve. This state of things continued until between 9 and 10 o’clock, when a large party of the enemy’s cavalry threatened our right flank, and, to prevent his destruction, Lieut. Walker was recalled. This demonstration, however, was repulsed by a well-directed discharge of shrapnell from the H. A. gun, by one of which a chief of consequence, supposed to be Abdoollah Khan, Achukzye, was mortally wounded.

By the recall of Lieut. Walker the enemy were enabled to surround our position at all points, except that facing the cantonments; our gun am-

munition was almost expended, and the men were faint with fatigue and thirst (no water being procurable), while the number of killed and wounded was swelled every instant

About this time (between 10 and 11 A. M.), large bodies of the enemy's infantry advanced across the plain from the Shah Bugh to the end of the hill, to cut off the supplies of ammunition coming from cantonments, as also the *dhoolies* on which we endeavoured to send off a few of the wounded. These, however, were checked by a party of our troops in the musjed, opposite the Kohistan gate, and by about fifty *juzailchees* under the temporary command of Capt. Trevor, (Capt. Mackenzie, their leader, having been requested by Brigadier Shelton to act as one of the staff for the day,) who lined some low walls and watercourses, as well as by frequent discharges of round shot and shrapnell from the cantonment guns under Lieut Warburton

Previously to this, numbers of the most daring Ghazees had descended into the gorge, and, taking advantage of some hillocks on the ascent towards our position, had crept gradually up, maintaining a deadly fire on our skirmishers, who were, unfortunately, wholly exposed, they became at length disheartened, and gave way. At this moment the Brigadier offered a reward of

100 rupees to any man who should take a flag of the enemy, which had been planted behind a tumulus about thirty yards in front of the square, and he fruitlessly endeavoured to induce the men to charge bayonets; several of the officers at the same time advanced to the front, and actually pelted the enemy with stones.* All attempts, however, to encourage our men were in vain. The attacking party were now emboldened to make a rush upon our gun; our cavalry were ordered to charge, but again in vain, for the men would not follow their officers.† The panic spread, and our troops gave way, except the second square, which had been formed about 200 yards in the rear, and three companies under Major Kershaw at the other extremity of the hill; behind this second square the officers with great difficulty rallied the fugitives, leaving the

* The names of this little band of heroes deserve to be recorded: they were Capt. Macintosh and Lieut. Laing, who were almost instantly killed, and Capts. Mackenzie, Troup, and Leighton; the latter fell in the retreat of the army from Cabul, the other two happily still survive to fight their country's battles: of such men the Indian army may well be proud.

† Capts. Bott and Collyer, 5th Light Cavalry; Lieut. Walker, Irregular Horse; Russular Ishmael Khan, Jemadar Synd, Mahomed Synd, and Mirza Musseer Bey, of Anderson's Horse.

gun in the hands of the enemy, who lost no time in walking off with the limber and horses

By this time the news of Abdoolah Khan's wound had spread among the ranks of the enemy, causing great confusion, which extended to the Ghazees now in possession of the gun. This, and the tolerably firm attitude resumed by our troops, induced them to content themselves with the limber and horses, and retire. Their retreat gave fresh courage to our disheartened soldiers, who again took possession of the gun, and advanced to the brow of the hill, where were found the bodies of Capt Macintosh and Lieut Laing, as well as those of the soldiers slain in the onset, including two H A men, who, with a devotedness worthy of British soldiers, had perished while vainly endeavouring to defend their charge. Some fresh gun ammunition having now arrived from cantonments, carried by Lascars, a fire was again opened on the ranks of the enemy, but we were unable to push the advantage gained by the momentary disorder alluded to above, because, in fact, the cavalry would not act. In the observations on this action, made hereafter, there will be found some pillorion for the backwardness of the cavalry on this occasion, in spite of the gallant bearing of their leaders, the infantry were too few, and too much worn out and disheartened, to

be able to make a forward movement. The consequence was, that not only did the whole force of the enemy come on with renewed vigour and spirits, maintaining at the same time the fatal juzail fire which had already so grievously thinned our ranks, but fresh numbers poured out of the city, and from the surrounding villages, until the hill occupied by them scarcely afforded room for them to stand.

This unequal conflict having lasted until past noon, during which period reinforcements and an additional gun had been in vain solicited from the cantonments, Brigadier Shelton sent Capt. Mackenzie to request Major Kershaw to move up his reserve (which could scarcely so be called, having been the whole day hard pressed by large bodies of the enemy in the village, and by parties occupying ruins and broken ground on the skirts of his position). The Major, fearing that, if he abandoned the knoll on which he had been stationed, our retreat to the cantonments (then becoming more and more imperatively necessary) might be cut off, made answer, that "he begged to suggest, that the Brigadier should fall back upon him." Before this message could be delivered, the front ranks of the advanced square, at the Brigadier's extremity of the hill, had been literally mowed down; — most of the artillerymen, who per-

formed their duty in a manner which is beyond praise, shared the same fate. The manœuvre practised by the Ghazees previously was repeated by still greater numbers. The evident unsteadiness of our troops, and the imminent danger to which the gun was a second time exposed, induced the Brigadier, after repeated suggestions from Serg Mullall, who commanded the battery, to order the gun to be limbered up—a second limber having arrived from cantonments—and to retire towards Major Kershaw's position. Scarcely had this movement been commenced, when a rush from the Ghazees completely broke the square—all order was at an end—the entreaties and commands of the officers, endeavouring to rally the men, were not even listened to, and an utter rout ensued down the hill in the direction of cantonments, the enemy closely following, whose cavalry, in particular, made a fearful slaughter among the unresisting fugitives. Major Kershaw's party, perceiving this disaster, endeavoured to escape, but strong parties, issuing from the village, cut off their retreat, and thus great numbers of our Sepoys perished. The grenadier company, especially, was all but annihilated. The mingled tide of flight and pursuit seemed, to those who manned the walls of cantonment, to be about to enter the gate together, and, by some fatality,

the ammunition of the great guns in battery within the cantonments was almost expended. A heavy fire, however, was opened from the Shah's 5th Infantry in the Mission Compound: a fresh troop of the 5th Cavalry, under Lieut. Hardyman, charged across the plain towards the enemy, joined by Lieut. Walker, who had rallied fifteen or twenty of his own men; during which gallant effort this most promising and brave young officer received a mortal wound. These operations, assisted by a sharp discharge from the *juzailchees* under Capt. Trevor, contributed to check the pursuit; and it was observed at the time, and afterwards ascertained to be correct, that a chief (Osman Khan) voluntarily halted his followers, who were among the foremost, and led them off; which may be reckoned, indeed, the chief reason why *all* of our people, who on that day went forth to battle, were not destroyed. Our loss *was* tremendous; the principal part of the wounded having been left in the field, including Lieut.-Col. Oliver, where they were miserably cut to pieces. Our gun and second limber, which, while endeavouring to gallop down the hill, had overturned on rough ground, we had the mortification to behold triumphantly carried off by the enemy.

About half an hour previous to the flight of our troops, a note had been written to the Assist.-

Adjut - Gen by Capt Troup, earnestly requesting that the Mountain train gun, which had by that time been repaired, might be sent out with the least possible delay, and the first idea that suggested itself to that officer after our desert was, that by quickly bringing this gun to bear upon the H A gun, then in the hands of the enemy, the latter might still be saved. He therefore galloped with speed to cantonments, where finding the Mountain train gun just ready to start, he was on the point of leading it out of the gate, when his progress was interrupted by the Assist - Adjut Gen, on the plea that it would now be of no use. Thus is the more to be lamented, as, from the spot occupied by Capt Trevor's juzzulchees, who, protected by a low wall, still kept up a sharp and effectual fire on the enemy, the range to the side of the hill whence the Affghans were endeavouring to carry off the captured gun, about which they clustered in thousands, was so short, that grape, even from a small caliber, must have prevented the execution of their intentions. Had the company of fresh infantry, which was drawn up outside the gate under command of Lieut Alexander, moved forward in company with the mountain gun to the support of the above gallant handful of juzzulchees, excellent service might

have been rendered. But it seemed as if we were under the ban of Heaven.

OBSERVATIONS.

In this miserable and disastrous affair no less than six great errors must present themselves, even to the most unpractised military eye, each of which contributed in no slight degree to the defeat of our troops, opposed as they were by overwhelming numbers.

1st. The first and perhaps most fatal mistake of all was the taking out a *single* gun. The General Order by the Marquess of Hastings, expressly forbidding less than two guns to take the field, under any circumstances or on any pretence whatever, when another is available, must be well known at least to every officer who has served in India. This positive prohibition was the offspring of dearly-bought experience; and the action of Beymaroo affords another convincing example of the risk to which a single gun is exposed, when unsupported by the fire of a second. It was certainly the Brigadier's intention to take the mountain gun also; but this had unfortunately been disabled on the previous day, and it had been twice specially reported, both to the Brigadier and to the General

the foregoing night, by Capt. Troup, that it could not be got ready before 12 A.M. on the following day.

2dly. The second error is scarcely less evident than the first. — Had immediate advantage been taken of the panic which our unexpected cannonade created among the possessors of the village, — whose slack fire afforded sufficient evidence of the actual fact that they were not only contemptible in numbers, but short of ammunition, — had, I say, a storming party been led to the attack under cover of the darkness, which would have nullified the advantage they possessed in being under cover, the place must inevitably have fallen into our hands, and thus would the principal object of the sally have been gained, and a good line of retreat secured for our troops in case of necessity.

3dly. The third error was so manifest as to be quite unaccountable. A party of 100 sappers had accompanied the force for the express purpose of raising a *sunga*. The fittest place for such a work would have been half-way along the ridge occupied by us, where our troops would then have been wholly protected from the fire of the *juzails* from the opposite hill, while the enemy could not have advanced to the attack without exposing themselves to the full effects of our musketry and

grape. It would, in fact, have infused into our troops a sense of security from any sudden charge of the enemy's horse, and at the same time have enabled our own cavalry to issue forth with the assurance of having in their rear a place of defence, on which to fall back, if hard pressed by the enemy. It has been seen that no such defence was raised.

4thly. All have heard of the British squares at *Waterloo*, which defied the repeated desperate onsets of Napoleon's choicest *cavalry*. At *Bejmaroo* we formed squares to resist the *distant fire of infantry*, thus presenting a solid mass against the aim of perhaps the best marksmen in the world, the said squares being securely perched on the summit of a steep and narrow ridge, up which no cavalry *could* charge with effect. A Peninsular General would consider this to be a novel fashion; yet Brigadier Shelton had the benefit of Peninsular experience in his younger days, and, it must be owned, was never surpassed in dauntless bravery.

5thly. Our cavalry, instead of being found upon the plain, where they might have been useful in protecting our line of communications with the cantonments, and would have been able to advance readily to any point where their services might have been required, were hemmed in between two

infantry squares, and exposed for several hours to a destructive fire from the enemy's juzzails, on ground where, even under the most favourable circumstances, they could not have acted with effect. This false and unsatisfactory position of course discouraged the troopers, and, when the infantry finally gave way, the two arms of the service became mixed up in a way that greatly increased the general confusion, and rendered it impossible for the infantry to rally, even had they been so disposed. The truth is, that the cavalry were not allowed fair play, and such a position must have disgusted and dispirited *any* troops.

6thly. Shortly after our regaining possession of the gun, one of the Brigadiers staff, Capt Mackenzie, feeling convinced that, from the temper of the troops, and from the impossibility of rectifying the false position in which the force was placed, not only was success beyond hope, but that defeat in its most disastrous shape was fast approaching, proposed to the Brigadier to endeavour to effect a retreat, while it was yet in his power to do so with comparative impunity. His reply was, "Oh, no! we will hold the hill some time longer." At that time, even if the slaughter of the soldiery, the loss of officers, the evident panic in our ranks, and the worse than false nature of our position, had not been sufficient to

open all eyes as to the impossibility even of partial success, (for the real object of the expedition, viz. the possession of the village of Beymaroo, had been, as it were, abandoned from the very first,) the weakness and exhaustion of both men and horses, who were not only worn out by bodily fatigue, but suffering grievously from extreme thirst and the debility attendant on long fasting, ought to have banished all idea of further delaying a movement, in which alone lay the slightest chance of preserving to their country lives, by the eventual sacrifice of which not even the only solace to the soldier in the hour of misfortune, the consciousness of unimpaired honour, was likely to be gained.

CHAP. VII.

OUR PASSIVENESS. — CONFERENCES AND NEGOTIATIONS
WITH THE INSURGENT CHIEFS. — LOSS OF MAHOMED
SHEREEF'S FORT. — TERMS AGREED ON.

November 24th.—Our troops had now lost all confidence; and even such of the officers as had hitherto indulged the hope of a favourable turn in our affairs began at last reluctantly to entertain gloomy forebodings as to our future fate. Our force resembled a ship in danger of wrecking among rocks and shoals, for want of an able pilot to guide it safely through them. Even now, at the eleventh hour, had the helm of affairs been grasped by a hand competent to the important task, we might perhaps have steered clear of destruction; but, in the absence of any such deliverer, it was but too evident that Heaven alone could save us by some unforeseen interposition. The spirit of the men was gone; the influence of the officers over them declined daily; and that boasted discipline, which alone renders a handful of our troops superior to an irregular multitude, began fast to disappear from among us. *The enemy*, on the other hand, waxed bolder every day and every

hour, nor was it long ere we got accustomed to be bearded with impunity from under the very ramparts of our garrison.

I have already mentioned the new bridge thrown over the river by Gen. Elphinstone: this the enemy, advancing up the bed of the river under cover of the bank, to-day began to demolish. I must do Brigadier Shelton the justice to say that he, seeing the vast importance of the bridge in case of a retreat (an alternative of which he never lost sight), had strongly urged the erection of a field-work for its protection; in fact, there was a small unfinished fort near at hand, which one night's work of the sappers would have rendered fit for the purpose, and a small detachment thrown into it would have perfectly commanded the bridge. But madness was equally apparent in all that was done or left undone: even this simple precaution was neglected, and the result will be seen in the sequel.

Capt. Conolly now wrote in from the Bala Hissar, strongly advising an immediate retreat thither, on which movement several of the chief military and all the political officers considered our only hope of holding out through the winter to depend. But the old objections were still urged against the measure by Brigadier Shelton and others; and the General, in a letter this day ad-

dressed to the Envoy, expressed his opinion that "the movement, if not altogether impossible, would be attended with great difficulty, encumbered as we should be with numerous sick and wounded. The enemy would doubtless oppose us with their whole force, and the greater part of the troops would be required to cover the operation, thus leaving the cantonments imperfectly defended, that the men were harassed, dispirited, and greatly reduced in numbers, and failure would be attended with certain destruction to the whole force. To remove the ammunition and stores would be the work of several days, during which the enemy would hover around, and offer every obstacle to our operations. Our wounded were increased, whilst our means of conveying them were diminished. Would the Bala Hissar hold the force with all the followers? Water was already said to be selling there at a high price.* We had barely twenty days supply of provisions in the cantonments, and, even supposing we could find means to carry it with us, there was no prospect of obtaining more in the Bala Hissar. A retreat thence would be worse than from our present position, after having abandoned our cattle, and the sick and wounded must be left

* This report was entirely untrue

behind us." In these opinions Brigadier Shelton entirely concurred. An appalling list of objections, it must be confessed, but insufficient to shake my belief that a removal of the force into the Bala Hissar was not only practicable but necessary for our safety and honour; while the risks attending it, though formidable, were only such as we ought, as soldiers, to have unhesitatingly incurred. Shah Shoojah had moreover declared himself impatient to receive us; and, even had the dreaded ruin overwhelmed us in the attempt, would it not have been a more manly and honourable course, than the inglorious treaty we shortly afterwards entered into with a treacherous band of rebels, by which we deserted the sovereign whom it was our duty to protect to the last drop of our blood? Had we boldly sallied forth, preferring death to dishonour, would not the fate of our poor fellows have been an hundred-fold happier than that they subsequently experienced in their miserable retreat, inasmuch as they would have died in the consciousness of having bravely done their duty? Never were troops exposed to greater hardships and dangers; yet, sad to say, never did soldiers shed their blood with less beneficial result than during the investment of the British lines at Cabul. While, therefore, justice is done to the memory of the dead,

and those, who encountered a thousand perils in the brave and skilful performance of their duty, must be held up to that honour which is their due—while the tear of pity may well be shed at their untimely fate—the blame and discredit also must be *theirs*, who rendered nugatory all the oblations of blood that were offered, all the advantages that were gained, and finally involved a still formidable force in ruin and disgrace. But to return to my narrative.

A letter to the address of the Envoy was this day received from Osman Khan*, Barukzye, a near relative of the new King, and generally supposed to have a favourable bearing towards us, wherein he took credit to himself for having “checked the ardour of his followers in their pursuit of our flying troops on the preceding day, when, by following up their success, the loss of our cantonments and the destruction of our force was inevitable, but that it was not the wish of the chiefs to proceed to such dreadful extremities, their sole desire being that we should quietly evacuate the country, leaving them to govern it according to their own rules, and with a King of their own choosing.” On the receipt of this friendly communication, the Envoy requested the

* This chief had sheltered Capt. Drummond in his own house since the first day of the outbreak.

General to state his opinion regarding the possibility, in a military point of view, of retaining our position in the cantonments; as, in case of a negative reply, he might be able to enter into negotiations with the existing rulers of the country.

The General replied to the effect that "we had now been in a state of siege for three weeks; our provisions were nearly expended, and our forage entirely consumed, without the prospect of procuring a fresh supply; that our troops were much reduced by casualties, and the large number of sick and wounded increased almost daily; and that, considering the difficulty of defending the extensive and ill-situated cantonment, the near approach of winter, the fact of our communications being cut off, and that we had no prospect of reinforcement, with the whole country in arms against us, he did not think it possible to retain our present position in the country, and therefore thought the Envoy ought to avail himself of the offer to negotiate, which had been made him."

November 27th.—Nothing else of consequence took place until this morning, when two deputies from the assembled chiefs, having made their appearance at the bridge, were ushered into cantonments by Capts. Lawrence and Trevor, the

Envoy having agreed to confer with them, on condition that nothing should be proposed which it would be derogatory in him to consider. The interview took place in the officers' guard room at the eastern gate, the exact particulars did not transpire, but the demands made by the chiefs were such as it was impossible to comply with, and the deputies took leave of the Envoy with the exclamation that "we should meet again in battle!" "We shall at all events meet," replied Sir William, "at the day of judgment." At night the Envoy received a letter from the chiefs, proposing terms of so disgraceful and insulting a nature as seemed at once to preclude all hope of terminating our difficulties by treaty. The tenor of them was as follows: "That we should deliver up Shah Shoojah and his whole family, lay down our arms, and make an unconditional surrender, when they might perhaps be induced to spare our lives, and allow us to leave the country on condition of never returning." The Envoy's reply was such as well became the representative of his country's honour. "He was astonished," he said, "at their departing from that good faith for which he had given them credit, by violating the conditions on which he had been led to entertain proposals for a pacific arrangement, that the terms they proposed were too dishonourable to

be entertained for a moment; and that, if they persisted in them, he must again appeal to arms, leaving the result to the God of battles."

December 1st.—No active renewal of hostilities took place until to-day, when a desperate effort was made by the enemy to gain possession of the Bala Hissar, which they endeavoured to effect by a night attack, in the first instance, on the *Bourge-i-lakh*, an isolated tower forming an out-work to the fortress, and from its elevated position commanding almost the entire works. This point was, however, strongly reinforced without delay by Major Ewart, commanding the garrison, and notwithstanding the determined spirit exhibited by the enemy, who made repeated charges up the hill, they were repulsed with considerable slaughter.

December 4th.—At an early hour the enemy moved out in force from the city, and, having crowned the Beymaroo hills, posted two guns in the gorge, from which they maintained a tolerably brisk fire for several hours into the cantonments, effecting fortunately but little mischief; in the evening they, as usual, retired to their respective haunts. During the night a rush was suddenly made by a party of Affghans to the gate of Mahomed Shereeff's fort, garrisoned by our troops, which they attempted, in imitation of our own

method at the taking of Ghuznee, to blow open with powder bags, but without success.

December 5th.—This day the enemy completed the destruction of our bridge over the river, which they commenced on the 24th ult., no precaution having been taken to prevent the evil. Day after day we quietly looked on without an effort to save it, orders being in vain *solicited* by various officers for preventive measures to be adopted. In consequence of the enemy having commenced mining one of the towers of Mahomed Shereeff's fort, the garrison was reinforced, and Lieut. Sturt succeeded during the night in destroying the mine. This, however, could only be effected at the expense of opening a passage under the walls, which it became necessary to barricade, and although this measure of precaution was efficiently executed, such was the nervous state of the party composing the garrison, that no reliance could be placed on their stability in case of an attack.

December 6th —The garrison of Mahomed Shereeff's fort was relieved at an early hour by one company of H. M.'s 41th, under Lieut. Grey, and one company 37th N. I. under Lieut. Hawtrey, an amply sufficient force for the defence of the place against any sudden onset, but, unhappily, the fears of the old garrison were communicated to the new,

and, owing to the representations of Lieut. Hawtrey, the defences were minutely examined by Lieut. Sturt, the garrison engineer, and by him pronounced to be complete. Scarcely, however, had that officer returned to cantonments, ere information was conveyed to the General that the detachment, having been seized with a panic, had taken flight over the walls, and abandoned the fort to the enemy. It would appear that a small party of juzailchees, having crept up to the undermined tower under cover of the trees in the Shah Bagh, had fired upon the garrison through the harried breach which I have above described, unfortunately wounding Lieut. Grey, upon whose departure for medical aid the Europeans, deprived of their officer, lost what little confidence they had before possessed, and, collecting their bedding under the walls, betrayed symptoms of an intention to retreat. The enemy meanwhile, emboldened by the slackened fire of the defenders, approached momentarily nearer to the walls, and, making a sudden rush to the barricade, completed the panic of the garrison, who now made their escape over the walls in the greatest consternation, deaf to the indignant remonstrances of their gallant commander, who in vain entreated them not to disgrace themselves and him by such cowardly proceedings. Even

the Sepoys, who at first remained staunch, contaminated by the bad example set them by their European brethren, refused to rally, and Lieut Hawtrey, finding himself deserted by all, was obliged reluctantly to follow, being the last to leave the fort. It is, however, worthy of mention, that two Sepoys of the 37th N I were left dead in the fort, and two others were wounded, while not a man of the 44th was touched, excepting one whose hand suffered from the accidental explosion of a grenade.

The enemy, though at first few in numbers, were not slow to avail themselves of the advantage afforded them by this miserable conduct of our troops, and their banner was soon planted in triumph on the walls, amidst the exulting shouts of hundreds. Much recrimination took place between the Europeans and the Sepoys engaged in this affair, each declaring the other had been the first to run, and a court of inquiry was assembled to investigate the matter, the result of which, though never entirely divulged, was generally supposed to be favourable to the Sepoys, it being a known fact, that the Europeans had brought off nearly all their bedding safe, whilst the Sepoys had left everything behind. At all events, a circumstance soon occurred, which abundantly testified the impression made on those in command. At this

time the bazar village was garrisoned by a party of H. M.'s 44th, who, on observing the flight of the soldiers from Mahomed Shereeff's fort, were actually on the point of abandoning their own post, when they were observed and stopped by some officers, of whom one was Lieut. White, the adjutant of the regiment; but so little dependence could now be placed on their stability, that a guard from the 37th N. I. was stationed at the entrance of the bazar, with strict orders to prevent the exit of any Europeans on duty in the place.

December 7th. — The European garrison was this day withdrawn from the bazar, and a company of the 37th N. I. substituted in their room! This, being the weakest point of our defences, had hitherto been protected entirely by parties of H. M.'s 44th, which post of honour they were now considered unworthy to retain.

I may here be excused for offering a few brief remarks.

In the course of this narrative, I have been compelled by stern truth to note down facts nearly affecting the honour and interests of a British regiment. It may, or rather I fear it must, inevitably happen that my unreserved statements of the Cabul occurrences will prove unacceptable to many, whose private or public feel-

ings are interested in glossing over or suppressing the numerous errors committed and censures deservedly incurred. But my heart tells me that no paltry motives of rivalry or malice influence my pen, rather a sincere and honest desire to benefit the public service, by pointing out the rocks on which our reputation was wrecked, the means by which our honour was sullied and our Indian empire endangered, as a warning to future actors in similar scenes. In a word, I believe that more good is likely to ensue from the publication of the whole unmitigated truth, than from a mere garbled statement of it. A kingdom has been lost — an army slain, — and surely, if I can show that, had we been but true to ourselves, and had vigorous measures been adopted, the result might have been widely different, I shall have written an instructive lesson to rulers and subjects, to generals and armies, and shall not have incurred in vain the disapprobation of the self interested or the proud. It is notorious that the 11th foot had been for a long time previous to these occurrences in a state of woful deterioration. I firmly believe that in this, and in every other respect, they stood alone as a regiment of that noble army whose glorious deeds in all quarters of the globe have formed, with those of the British navy, the foundation of our national pride, and have supplied for

ages to come a theme of wonder and admiration. The regiment in question fell a prey to a vital disease, which the Horse Guards alone could have remedied, and which is now beyond the reach of proper investigation. May a redeeming glory and renown rise from its ashes!

The alarming discovery having been made that our supply of provisions had been materially overrated, and that not even a sufficiency for one day remained in store, Capt. Hay was despatched with a convoy of military stores into the Bala Hissar, with orders to bring back the animals laden with grain. He started several hours before daybreak, but on reaching the Seeah Sung hill, a few straggling shots being fired upon his rear, the men riding the laden *yaboos* (Affghan ponies) were panic-stricken, and, hastily casting the loads to the ground, galloped for safety to the front. Much private property was lost at the same time, for, notwithstanding all the opposition that had been made to the proposal of a retreat to the Bala Hissar, the General in some degree deferred to the opinions of those who favoured the movement, by adopting the half-measure of sending in magazine supplies from time to time by driblets. This led many to suppose that the whole force would sooner or later retreat thither, and accordingly advantage was taken of

every opportunity to send in a few private necessities in advance. On this occasion the attempt failed in the manner I have above related; but Capt. Hay nevertheless accomplished the primary object of his journey, by bringing back as much provisions as could be collected on so short a notice.

December 8th.—The Envoy, having addressed a public letter to the General, requested him to state “whether or not it was his opinion that any further attempt to hold out against the enemy would merely have the effect of sacrificing both His Majesty Shah Shoojah and ourselves; and whether, supposing this to be so, the only alternative left was not to negotiate for our safe retreat out of the country, on the most favourable terms possible?” The General, in reply, stated his conviction that “the present situation of the troops was such, from the want of provisions and the impracticability of procuring more, that no time ought to be lost in entering into negotiations for a safe retreat from the country: That, as regarded the troops at Candahar, and the rumours of their approach to our assistance, he would be sorry, in the absence of all authentic information, to risk the sacrifice of the troops by waiting for their arrival, when we were ignorant even of their having commenced their march, and

were reduced to three days' supply of provisions for our Sepoys at half rations, and almost without any forage for our horses and cattle: That our number of sick and wounded in hospital exceeded 600, and our means for their transport were far from adequate, owing to the death by starvation of so many of our camels, from which cause also we should be obliged, at this inclement season, to leave their tents and bedding behind, with such a march before us: That, as regarded the King, he must be excused from entering upon that point of the Envoy's letter, and leave its consideration to his better knowledge and judgment; but he might be allowed to say that it little became him, as commanding the British troops in Affghanistan, to regard the necessity of negotiation in any other light than as concerned *their* honour and welfare, for both of which he should be answerable, by a further stay here, after the sudden and universal rebellion against His Majesty's authority which had taken place throughout his dominions: That the whole of the grain and forage in the vicinity was exhausted, and the defence of the extensive and ill-selected cantonment would not admit of distant expeditions, to obtain supplies from the strongly fortified dwellings of an armed and hostile population; our present numbers being in-

sufficient for its defence, and obliging the whole of the troops to be almost constantly under arms. In conclusion, he could only repeat his opinion that the Envoy should lose no time in entering into negotiations." This letter was countersigned by Brigadiers Shelton and Anquetil, and Colonel Chambers, who entirely concurred in the opinions it expressed. Meanwhile starvation stared us in the face, and it became necessary to adopt immediate measures for obtaining a further supply of provisions. A consultation was accordingly held with this object at the General's house, and it was determined that an attack should be made on the neighbouring fort of *Khoja Ruwash* at an early hour the following morning.

December 9th. — The morning dawned, but no signs of preparation appeared for the proposed enterprise; no bridge was laid down for the passage of the guns and cavalry; no troops were in readiness to march; and it was plain that either no orders had been given, or no attention had been paid to them. Thus, notwithstanding the importance of its object, the expedition was suffered to die a natural death.

Upon this subject I shall only remark that Brigadier Shelton commanded the garrison, and that with him the necessary arrangements rested.

Intelligence having been this day received of a decisive victory gained over the enemy by Gen. Sale at Jellalabad, the Envoy conceived it might have the effect of modifying the General's opinion, regarding the immediate necessity of negotiating with the rebel chiefs, and addressed him a letter on the subject. The General, however, declared in reply, that, pleasing as the intelligence was, it could not in the slightest degree influence our position, so as to affect the expediency of our treating; in forming which opinion he was much influenced by the joint representations that had been just made to him by Capts. Boyd and Johnson, the respective heads of the Company's and Shah's commissariat, wherein they declared their utter inability to procure grain or forage within three or four miles, and that, although three days' supply of *atta* (ground wheat) might still be procurable from the Bala Hissar, yet every additional day's delay now crippled the cattle more and more, and rendered our position more perilous. Notwithstanding these apparently conclusive arguments, there existed strong grounds for believing that the Bala Hissar contained a much larger supply of provisions than was generally supposed.

December 10th. — Another convoy of military stores was despatched to the Bala Hissar this morning under command of Lieut. Le Geyt, by

whom a further supply of *atta* was brought back in return

December 11th — The rebel chiefs having manifested an inclination to treat, the Envoy, accompanied by Capts. Lawrence, Mackenzie, and Trevor, went out to meet them on the plain towards Seah Sung. There were present Mahomed Akber Khan, Osman Khan, Mahomed Khan Naib Ameer (commonly called Naib Ameer), Barukzyes, — Mahomed Shah Khan, Humza Khan, Khooda Bux Khan, Giljyes, — Juayut Oolol Khan, Populzye, — Khan Shereen Khan, Kuzzilbash, — and several others of inferior note, but all heads of tribes. After the exchange of salutations, Sir William addressed the assembled Khans, alluding to past times, during which relations of perfect cordialty and friendship had existed between them and the English. He greatly lamented that feelings of so pleasant and mutually beneficial a nature should have been thus rudely interrupted, but professed himself wholly ignorant of the causes of such interruption. He proceeded to state that sentiments of good will towards the Affghan nation had principally induced the British government to lend their aid, in restoring to the seat of his ancestors a king, who, notwithstanding his misfortunes, originating in causes to which he

would not then allude, had ever reigned in the hearts of the mass of his people; that the restoration of their monarch had apparently given the utmost satisfaction to all classes throughout his dominions. If, however, that satisfaction had passed away, and given place to emotions of a wholly contrary nature (and he supposed that the assembled Sirdars and Khans might be considered the mouth-piece of the people), it no longer became the British Government to persist in a course so displeasing to those chiefly interested in the result. On this account he was willing to enter into negotiations, for the smoothing over of present difficulties, and for the adopting of such measures as were likely to be the most conducive towards the re-establishment of that mutual friendship between the British and Affghan governments, the maintenance of which, he felt assured, must be earnestly desired by both parties. — To all these propositions Mahomed Akber Khan and Osman Khan, as the principal personages present, expressed, with the hearty concurrence of the inferior chiefs, their entire assent, adding many expressions of their personal esteem for the Envoy himself, and their gratitude for the way in which the exiled Ameer had been used. The Envoy then requested permission to read to them a paper containing a general sketch of the

proposed treaty. This being agreed to, the articles of the treaty were read and discussed. Their general purport was to the effect—That the British should evacuate Affghanistan, including Candahar, Ghuznee, Cabul, Jellalabad, and all the other stations absolutely within the limits of the country so called;—that they should be permitted to return not only unmolested to India, but that supplies of every description should be afforded them in their road thither, certain men of consequence accompanying them as hostages;—that the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan, his family, and every Affghan now in exile for political offences, should be allowed to return to their country;—that Shah Shoojah and his family should be allowed the option of remaining at Cabul or proceeding with the British troops to Loodiana, in either case receiving from the Affghan government a pension of one lac of rupees per annum;—that means of transport for the conveyance of our baggage, stores, &c., including that required by the royal family, in case of their adopting the latter alternative, should be furnished by the existing Affghan government;—that an amnesty should be granted to all those who had made themselves obnoxious on account of their attachment to Shah Shoojah and his allies, the British;—that all prisoners

should be released ; — that no British force should be ever again sent into Affghanistan, unless called for by the Affghan government, between whom and the British nation perpetual friendship should be established on the sure foundation of mutual good offices.

To all these terms the chiefs cordially agreed, with the exception of Mahomed Akber, who cavilled at several, especially that of the amnesty, but was overruled by his coadjutors. He positively refused to permit the garrison to be supplied with provisions until it had quitted cantonments, which movement he clamorously demanded should take place the following morning. His violence caused some confusion ; but the more temperate of his party having interfered, it was finally agreed that our evacuation of the cantonments should take place in three days — that provisions should be supplied — and that to all the above-mentioned articles of this new treaty a formal assent in writing should be sent, with all the usual forms of a restored peace. The chiefs, on returning to the city, took with them Capt. Trevor as a hostage for the sincerity of the Envoy. During the whole of this interview, which took place not far from the bottom of the Seeah Sung hills, great anxiety was felt in the cantonments from the apparent danger to which the Envoy was exposed, — he

ing accompanied only by a few troopers of the
y guard,—and from the circumstance of large
ies of the enemy's horse and foot being seen
pass towards the scene of conference from the
, their leaders evidently with much difficulty
raining their advance beyond a certain point
William, however, although not unaware of
perfidious nature of those he had to deal with,
insensible to the risk he ran, (a shot in fact,
n the fanatic multitude, having whistled over
heads of the gentlemen in attendance on him,
hey advanced towards the rendezvous,) wisely
gined that a display of confidence was the best
de of begetting good faith. It is, however,
ity certain that the tumultuary movements of
Affghan troops, whose presence was in direct
ation of the stipulations under which the con-
nce was held, were not without their cause, it
ing been the earnest desire of Mahomed
ber to seize upon the Envoy's person at that
y meeting, from which step he was with diffi-
ty restrained by the other Khans. But no
se of personal danger could have deterred a
n of Sir Wilham's truly chivalrous and un-
anted character from the performance of any
y, private or public
Would that he had been more alive to the
prehensions which influenced common men!

We might not then have to mourn over the untimely fate of one, whose memory must be ever cherished in the hearts of all who knew and were capable of appreciating him, notwithstanding the disastrous termination of his political career, as that of a good, and, in many essential points, a great man.

CHAP VIII

PREPARATIONS FOR EVACUATING — MORE CONFERENCES.—
 MORE DELAYS — MORE DIFFICULTIES — MAHOMED
 AKBERS PLOT AGAINST THE ENVOY — HIS MURDER

December 12th — It is undeniable that Sir William Macnaghten was forced into this treaty with men whose power he despised, and whose treachery was proverbial, against his own judgment, by the pressing representations of our military heads. It is no less true that, whatever may have been his political remissness or want of foresight before the rebellion broke out, he had, throughout the perils that afterwards beset us, displayed a truly British spirit of unflinching fortitude and indefatigable energy, calculated, under more auspicious leaders, to have stimulated the zeal and valour of the troops, and to have cheered them under the trials and hardships they were called on to endure, and I can safely add, without fear of contradiction, that scarcely an enterprise was undertaken throughout the siege, but at the suggestion, and even the entreaties, of the Envoy, he volunteering to take on himself the entire responsibility. Justice demands this

tribute to the memory of one, whose acts, as they will assuredly undergo the severe scrutiny of his countrymen, it therefore becomes the duty of every eye-witness, who bears testimony on the subject, not only to shield from misrepresentation, but, where they are deserving of it, to hold up to public admiration. I am led to write this solely by my public knowledge of the man. If I could bring myself, on matters of such vital importance, to follow the dictates of mere private feeling, my bias would be altogether on the side of my late lamented military chief, who honoured me with his friendship, and for whose infirmities every allowance ought, in common justice, to be made. With a mind and talents of no ordinary stamp, and a hitherto unsullied fame, *he* committed the fatal error of transporting himself suddenly from a state of prolonged luxurious repose, at an advanced age, to undertake the fatigues and cares inseparable from high military command, in a foreign uncongenial climate; he thus not only ruined his already shattered health, but (which to a soldier was a far worse calamity) grievously damaged that high reputation which his early services had secured for him.

The terms of the new treaty were immediately made known to Shah Shoojah; by which that unfortunate monarch found himself once more

doomed to an old age of exile and degradation. The first step towards its fulfilment was the withdrawal of our troops from the Bala Hissar, which was to have taken place this very day, but was postponed for a short time longer, to admit of the necessary preparations being made. A deputation of chiefs had an interview in the close of the day, who were the bearers of a most unexpected proposition, to the effect that Shah Shoojah should continue king, on condition of intermarrying his daughters with the leading Affghan chiefs, and abandoning the offensive practice of keeping the chief nobles of his kingdom waiting for hours at his gate, in expectation of audience. The Affghans hate ceremony, which Shah Shoojah carried at all times to an absurd extent; hence much of his unpopularity. This arrangement was not intended to annul those parts of the treaty which related to our immediate evacuation of the country, for the fulfilment of which some married families were demanded as hostages.

December 13th. — Such was the inveterate pride of the King, that he yielded a most reluctant consent to the above-mentioned proposals, notwithstanding that the only alternative was the instant resignation of his kingdom. Little confidence was, however, placed by the Envoy in the

sincerity of the chiefs, whose hatred of the Doraanee ruler was notorious. As our retreat was now fully decided on, and our well-stocked magazine was shortly to fall a prey to our enemies, the General ordered that some ammunition should be distributed to certain of the camp-followers; and commanding officers were directed to indent for new arms and accoutrements, in exchange for such as were old and damaged. The reins of discipline had, however, by this time become so terribly relaxed, and so little attention was paid to superior orders by either officers or men, that many of the officers in command of companies rested content with sending their men to the magazine, to help themselves at will, the stores being unfortunately, in the absence of any finished building for their reception, arranged under the trees of an orchard, in charge of a small guard. The consequence was, as might have been expected, a scene of disgraceful confusion and plunder, which was rendered worse by a rush of camp-followers, who, imagining that a licence had been given for every one to take whatever he pleased, flocked in hundreds to the spot, and terribly increased the tumult; insomuch that the authority of several officers, who, observing what was going on, exerted themselves to restore order, was for several minutes set at

open defiance. At last, however, the place was cleared of the intruders, and the greater portion of the stolen articles was recovered the same evening. But this event may be taken as an instance of the unsteadiness of the troops, and of the recklessness that now began to extend itself amongst all ranks of the force.

At 2 P. M. the troops in the Bala Hissar, consisting of the 54th N. I., half of Capt. Nicholl's troop of horse artillery, and a detachment of the mountain train, with 2 howitzers, under Lieut. Green, commenced their evacuation of that fortress. They were also encumbered with an iron nine-pounder gun, and a twenty-four pounder brass howitzer, drawn by bullocks, which it was the General's wish should have been left behind, but his order to that effect had by some accident missed its destination. As the utmost scarcity of provisions prevailed in cantonments, Capt. Kirby, the commissariat officer, had zealously exerted himself to collect a supply of about 1600 maunds of wheat and flour to carry thither. Much delay, however, occurred in packing and loading; and, the best part of the day being nearly spent ere above one third of that quantity was ready, Major Ewart deemed it advisable to move off without further loss of time. He found Mahomed Akber Khan in waiting with a small body of followers

outside the gate, for the purpose of escorting him to cantonments; and, as evening drew nigh, a dense crowd of armed Affghans had been observed to collect on the Seah Sung hill, along the base of which our troops must pass, giving rise to suspicions of some meditated treachery. While the rear-guard, with the mountain train gun and a portion of the baggage, was leaving the gate, some of Mahomed Akber's followers, pushing quietly past them, endeavoured to effect an entrance into the fort; but on their being recognized by the king's guard, the gates were immediately shut, and a round or two of grape fired upon the intruders, with so indiscriminate an aim as to endanger the lives of Capt. Conolly and several of the Sepoys, of whom some were severely wounded. It can scarcely be doubted that Mahomed Akber's intention was to have seized the gate with a few of his men, until a rush of the Affghans from the hill should have enabled him to carry the body of the place by storm. The vigilance of the garrison having defeated this plan, the wily chief, imagining that the gates would again be opened to re-admit our troops, informed Major Ewart that, owing to the lateness of the hour and the threatening attitude assumed by the crowd on the hill, it would be necessary to postpone his march until the following morning. In consequence of this sudden

ill-timed announcement, Major Ewart applied to the King for the immediate readmission of his troops for shelter during the night; but the monarch, whose suspicions of foul play on the part of Mahomed Akber were now fully awakened, positively refused to accede to the request. The prospect of passing the night in the low marshy ground under the walls, without tents, bedding, firewood, or food, for officers or men, was sufficiently cheerless; while the fear of treachery on the part of Mahomed Akber, and the dangerous vicinity of an armed multitude, whose watch-fires already gleamed on the adjacent hills, tended but little to relieve the discomforts of such a situation. The cold was intensely bitter, and perhaps so miserable a night had never before been spent by Indian troops.

December 14th. — At an early hour this morning, Mahomed Akber having declared his readiness to proceed, the troops commenced their march. The advance-guard was suffered to proceed unmolested; but the rear-guard, on reaching the base of the Seah Sung hill, was fired upon by the enemy, who crowned the ridge; and the iron nine-pounder being for a few moments accidentally separated from the column in crossing a water-cut, an instantaneous rush was made upon it by a number of Affghans, and a poor sick Eu-

ropean artillery-man, who, for want of a more suitable conveyance, had been lashed to the gun, was unmercifully butchered. The approach of the rear-guard, and a round or two of grape from the mountain train howitzer, drove off the assailants; and they were restrained from offering any additional annoyance by the exertions of Mahomed Akber himself, who, galloping in amongst them with a few followers, threatened to cut down any who dared to be guilty of further opposition to the progress of the detachment, which accordingly reached cantonments safe at about 9 A. M.

December 16th. — Shah Shoojah having, for reasons best known to himself, withdrawn his consent to the arrangement which was to have continued him in the possession of his rights, the treaty resumed its original form; but the chiefs positively refused to supply provisions or forage, until we should further assure them of our sincerity by giving up every fort in the immediate vicinity of cantonments. Forage had for many days been so scarce, that the horses and cattle were kept alive by paring off the bark of trees, and by eating their own dung over and over again, which was regularly collected and spread before them. The camp-followers were destitute of other food than the flesh of animals, which expired daily from starvation and cold. The daily consumption

of atta by the fighting men was about 150 maunds, and not above two days' supply remained in store. By giving up the forts in question, all of which commanded the cantonment, we should place ourselves entirely at the mercy of the enemy, who could at any time render our position untenable. But our leaders now seemed to consider that we had no other chance left than to concede to the demands of the chiefs, however unreasonable; and our troops were accordingly withdrawn from the Rikabashee, Magazine, and Zoolfekar's forts, and from the Musjeed opposite the western gate, all of which were forthwith occupied by the Affghans, who, on their part, sent in Nussuroollah Khan, a brother of Nuwab Zuman Khan, as a hostage, and a supply of about 150 maunds of atta for the troops. They likewise promised us 2000 camels and 400 yaboos for the march to Jellalabad.

December 18th. — The delay of the chiefs in furnishing the necessary carriage, and the Shah's dilatoriness in deciding on his future course, compelled us from day to day to postpone our departure. Meanwhile the increasing severity of the winter rendered every hour's procrastination of the utmost consequence; and this morning our situation was rendered more desperate than ever by a heavy fall of snow, which covered the ground

to the depth of five inches, and never afterwards disappeared. Thus a new enemy entered on the scene, which we were destined to find even more formidable than an army of rebels.

December 19th. — The Envoy wrote an order for the evacuation of Ghuznee, and it was arranged that the 27th N. I., which garrisoned the place, should march through the Zoomut valley, and pursue the route of Dera Ishmael Khan. The 22d was fixed for our departure.

December 20th. — The Envoy had an interview with the chiefs, who now demanded that a portion of our guns and ammunition should be immediately given up. They also required Brigadier Shelton as a hostage. It was proposed by Lieut. Sturt to the General to break off the treaty, and march forthwith to Jellalabad, devoting all the means of transport we possessed to the service of the sick, and the conveyance of such public stores as were absolutely necessary. But neither the General nor his immediate advisers could bring themselves to adopt a course which would have saved the national honour, at the risk of sacrificing our whole force.

It has been truly said that a council of war never fights.—A door of hope had, until this day, still remained open to us in the approach of Col. Maclaren's force to our assistance from Candahar.

we now heard with despair of its retreat from Tazee, in consequence of the snow.

December 21st.—The Envoy met Osman Khan and Mahomed Akher Khan on the plain, when four hostages were fixed upon, two of whom (Capts. Conolly and Airey) were at once given over. Brigadier Shelton, having expressed a decided objection to undertake the duty, was not insisted upon. In the evening Capts. Trevor and Drummond were permitted to return to cantonments, the latter officer having been concealed in the city since the 2d of November.

December 22d.—I was ordered to conduct an officer of Nuwab Zuman Khan over the magazine, that he might make choice of such stores as would be most acceptable to the chiefs. I recommended a large pile of 8-inch shells to his notice, which I knew would be of no use to the chiefs, as the mortars were with Capt. Abbott's battery at Jelalabad. He eagerly seized the bait, and departed in great glee, with his prize laden on some old ammunition-waggon.

The Envoy at the same time sent his carriage as a present to Mahomed Akber Khan. That same night the last-named chief spread the net into which Sir William Macnaghten was, on the following day, so miserably lured to his destruction. Capt. Skinner, at this time living under

Mahomed Akber's protection, was made the bearer of proposals to the Envoy, of so advantageous a nature, as to prove, in his forlorn circumstances, irresistibly tempting.

Amenoollah Khan, the most influential of the rebels, was to be seized on the following day, and delivered up to us as a prisoner. Mahomed Khan's fort was to be immediately occupied by one of our regiments, and the Bala Hissar by another. Shah Shoojah was to continue king; Mahomed Akber was to become his wuzeer, and our troops were to remain in their present position until the following spring.—That a scheme like this, bearing impracticability on its very face, should have for a moment deceived a man of Sir William's usual intelligence and penetration, is indeed an extraordinary instance of infatuation, that can only be accounted for on the principle that a drowning man will catch at a straw. Our fortunes were now at their lowest ebb; the chiefs were apparently delaying our departure until the snow should have formed an impassable barrier to the removal of our troops, who, even in the absence of an enemy, would but too probably perish from cold and famine. A treaty formed with men famed for falsehood and treachery, and who had already shown an utter disregard of some of its most important stipulations, could be regarded as little better than so much waste paper;

added to which considerations, Sir William felt that his own fame was deeply involved in the issue of that policy*, of which he had from the very first been the prime advocate and upholder, and that with it he must stand or fall. The specious project of Mahomed Akber offered a solution to the difficulties that beset his path, at which he grasped with an eagerness engendered by despair. The strength of the rebels had hitherto lain in their unanimity, the proposed stroke of policy would at once dissolve the confederacy, and open a road by which to retrieve our ruined fortunes. On either hand there was danger, and, miserable as Sir William's life had been for the past six weeks, he was willing to stake his all on the issue of a plan which seemed to offer a faint hope of recovering the ground we had lost.

In a fatal hour he signed his name to a paper consenting to the arrangement — His doom was sealed — The whole was a scheme got up by the chiefs, to test his sincerity.

December 23d — At about noon Sir William Macnaghten, attended by Capts Lawrence, Trevor, and Mackenzie, left the mission-house to attend a conference with Mahomed Akber Khan on the plain towards Secah Sung. Previously to

* That of invading Afghanistan for the purpose of restoring Shah Shooah as king.

this he had requested the General that two regiments and two guns might be in readiness for secret service, and that, as the interview would be of a critical nature, the garrison might be kept well on the alert, and the walls strongly manned. In leaving the cantonments, Sir William expressed his disappointment at the paucity of men on the ramparts, and the apparent inertness of the garrison at such a critical moment, saying, "However, it is all of a piece with the military arrangements throughout the siege." On his leaving the gate only sixteen troopers of the body-guard were in attendance, but the remainder shortly afterwards joined, under Lieut. Le Geyt.

Sir William now for the first time explained to the officers who accompanied him the objects of the present conference ; and Capt. Lawrence was warned to be in readiness to gallop to the Bala Hissar, to prepare the King for the approach of a regiment.

Apprehensions being expressed of the danger to which the scheme might expose him, in case of treachery on the part of Mahomed Akber, he replied, " Dangerous it is ; but if it succeeds, it is worth all risks : the rebels have not fulfilled even one article of the treaty, and I have no confidence in them ; and if by it we can only save our honour, all will be well. At any rate, I would

rather suffer a hundred deaths, than live the last six weeks over again "

Meanwhile crowds of armed Affghans were observed hovering near the cantonment and about Mahomed Khan's fort, causing misgivings in the minds of all but the Envoy himself, whose confidence remained unshaken. On arriving near the bridge, they were met by Mahomed Akber Khan, Mahomed Shih Khan, Dost Mahomed Khan, Khouda Bux Khan, Azad Khan, and other chiefs, amongst whom was the brother of Amenoollah Khan, whose presence might have been sufficient to convince Sir William that he had been duped.

The usual civilities having passed, the Envoy presented Akber Khan with a valuable Arab horse, which had only that morning been purchased for 3000 rupees. The whole party then sat down near some rising ground, which partially concealed them from cantonments.

Capt Lawrence having called attention to the number of inferior followers around them, with a view to their being ordered to a distance, Mahomed Akber exclaimed, " No, they are all in the secret, " which words had scarcely been uttered, when Sir William and his three companions found themselves suddenly grasped firmly by the hands from behind, whilst their swords and pistols were rudely snatched away by the chiefs and their

followers. The three officers were immediately pulled forcibly along and compelled to mount on horseback, each behind a Giljye chief, escorted by a number of armed retainers, who with difficulty repelled the efforts of a crowd of fanatic Ghazees, who, on seeing the affray, had rushed to the spot, calling aloud for the blood of the hated infidels, aiming at them desperate blows with their long knives and other weapons, and only deterred from firing by the fear of killing a chief. The unfortunate Envoy was last seen struggling violently with Mahomed Akber, "consternation and horror depicted on his countenance."

On their nearing Mahomed Khan's fort, renewed attempts were made to assassinate the three captive officers by the crowd there assembled. Capt. Trevor, who was seated behind Dost Mahomed Khan, unhappily fell to the ground, and was instantly slain. Capts. Lawrence and Mackenzie reached the fort in safety, but the latter was much bruised in various parts of his body, and both were greatly exhausted from the excitement they had undergone.

At the entrance of the fort, a furious cut was aimed at Capt. Mackenzie's head by a ruffian named Moollah Momin, which was warded off by Mahomed Shah Khan, that chief receiving the blow on his own shoulder. Being taken into a

small room, they found themselves still in continual jeopardy from repeated assaults of the Ghizees without, who were with the greatest difficulty restrained from shooting them through the window, where the hand of some recent European victim (afterwards ascertained to be that of the Envoy himself) was insultingly held up to their view. Throughout this trying scene they received repeated assurances of protection from the Giljye chiefs, but Amenollah Khan coming in gave vent to a torrent of angry abuse, and even threatened to blow them from a gun. It is deserving of notice, that, amidst the congratulations which on all sides met the ear of Mahomed Shah Khan on the events of the day, the solitary voice of an aged Moollah was raised in condemnation of the deed, which he solemnly pronounced to be foul, and calculated to cast a lasting disgrace on the religion of Mahomed. At midnight they were removed to the house of Mahomed Akber Khan. As they passed through the streets of Cabul, notwithstanding the excitement that had prevailed throughout the day, it resembled a city of the dead, nor did they meet a single soul.

By Akber Khan they were received courteously, and were now informed for the first time by Capt Skinner of the murder of the Envoy and Capt Trevor. That Sir William Macnaghten met his death at the hands of Mahomed Akber himself

there can be no reasonable doubt. That chief had pledged himself to his coadjutors to seize the Envoy that day, and bring him into the city, when the chiefs hoped to have been able to dictate their own terms, retaining him as a hostage for their fulfilment. Finding it impossible, from the strenuous resistance Sir William offered, to carry him off alive, and yet determined not to disappoint the public expectation altogether, — influenced also by his tiger passions, and the remembrance of his father's wrongs, — Mahomed Akber drew a pistol, the Envoy's own gift a few hours before, and shot him through the body, which was immediately hacked to pieces by the ferocious Ghazees, by whom the dismembered trunk was afterwards carried to the city, and publicly exposed in the Char Chouk, or principal mart. The head was taken to the house of Nuwab Zuman Khan, where it was triumphantly exhibited to Capt. Conolly.

Such was the cruel fate of Sir William Macnaghten, the accomplished scholar, the distinguished politician, and the representative of Great Britain at the court of Shah Shooja-Ool-Moolk.

It cannot but be acceptable to my readers, if I here present entire the interesting and important letters of Capts. Mackenzie and Lawrence on this melancholy subject.

*Letter addressed by CAPTAIN C MACKENZIE to
LIEUTENANT VINCENT EYRE*

MY DEAR EYRE,

You ask for a minute account of the circumstances attending the assassination of the late Sir William Macnaghten, and my own detention and imprisonment on that occasion. You may remember that, for many days previous to the fatal 23d December, the poor Envoy had been subjected to more wear and tear, both of body and mind, than it was possible for the most iron frame and the strongest intellect to bear without deeply feeling its effects. He had fulfilled all the preliminary conditions of the treaty which had been proposed between the British and the Affghan insurgents, whereas the Khans had in no one particular adhered to their engagements. Bad faith was evident in all their proceedings, and our condition was a desperate one, more especially as Sir William had ascertained, by bitter experience, that no hope remained in the energies and resources of our military leaders, who had formally protested that they could do nothing more. Beset by this disgraceful imbecility on the one hand, and by systematic treachery on the other, the unfortunate Envoy was driven to his wits' end, and, as will be seen, forgot, in a

fatal moment, the wholesome rule which he had theretofore laid down for himself, of refusing to hold communication with individuals of the rebel party, especially with him who was notorious, even amongst his villanous countrymen, for ferocity and treachery, to wit, Mahomed Akber Khan. Late in the evening of the 22d December, Captain James Skinner, who, after having been concealed in Cabul during the greater part of the siege, had latterly been the guest of Mahomed Akber, arrived in cantonments, accompanied by Mahomed Sudeeq Khan, a first cousin of Mahomed Akber, and by Sirwar Khan, the Arhanee merchant, who, in the beginning of the campaign, had furnished the army with camels, and who had been much in the confidence of Sir A. Burnes, being, in fact, one of our staunchest friends. The two latter remained in a different apartment, while Skinner dined with the Envoy. During dinner, Skinner jestingly remarked that he felt as if laden with combustibles, being charged with a message from Mahomed Akber to the Envoy of a most portentous nature.

Even then I remarked that the Envoy's eye glanced eagerly towards Skinner with an expression of hope. In fact, he was like a drowning man catching at straws. Skinner however referred him to his Affghan companions, and after

dinner the four retired into a room by themselves. My knowledge of what there took place is gained from poor Skinner's own relation, as given during my subsequent captivity with him in Akber's house. Mahomed Sudeeq disclosed Mahomed Akber's proposition to the Envoy, which was, that the following day Sir William should meet him (Mahomed Akber) and a few of his immediate friends, viz the chiefs of the Eastern Giljyes, outside the cantonments, when a final agreement should be made, so as to be fully understood by both parties, that Sir William should have a considerable body of troops in readiness, which, on a given signal, were to join with those of Mahomed Akber and the Giljyes, assault and take Mahmood Khan's fort, and secure the person of Ameenooliah. At this stage of the proposition Mahomed Sudeeq signified that, for a certain sum of money, the head of Ameenooliah should be presented to the Envoy, but from this Sir William shrunk with abhorrence, declaring that it was neither his custom nor that of his country to give a price for blood. Mahomed Sudeeq then went on to say, that, after having subdued the rest of the Khans, the English should be permitted to remain in the country eight months longer, so as to save their *purdah* (veil, or credit), but that they were then

to evacuate Affghanistan, as if of their own accord; that Shah Shoojah was to continue king of the country, and that Mahomed Akber was to be his Wuzeer. As a further reward for his (Mahomed Akber's) assistance, the British Government were to pay him 30 laes of rupees, and 4 laes of rupees per annum during his life! To this extraordinary and wild proposal, Sir William gave ear with an eagerness which nothing can account for but the supposition, confirmed by many other circumstances, that his strong mind had been harassed, until it had in some degree lost its equipoise; and he not only assented fully to these terms, but actually gave a Persian paper to that effect, written in his own hand, declaring as his motives that it was not only an excellent opportunity to carry into effect the real wishes of government, which were to evacuate the country with as much credit to ourselves as possible, but that it would give England time to enter into a treaty with Russia, defining the bounds beyond which neither were to pass in Central Asia. So ended this fatal conference, the nature and result of which, contrary to his usual custom, Sir William communicated to none of those who, on all former occasions, were fully in his confidence, viz. Trevor, Lawrence, and myself. It seemed as if he feared that we might

insist on the impracticability of the plan, which he must have studiously concealed from himself. All the following morning his manner was distracted and hurried in a way that none of us had ever before witnessed. It seems that Mahomed Akber had demanded a favourite Arab horse, belonging to Captain Grant, Assist-Adj-Gen of force. To avoid the necessity of parting with the animal, Captain Grant had fixed his price at the exorbitant sum of 5000 rupees, unwilling to give so large a price, but determined to gratify the Sirdar, Sir William sent me to Captain Grant to prevail upon him to take a smaller sum, but with orders that if he were peremptory, the 5000 rupees should be given. I obtained the horse for 3000 rupees, and Sir William appeared much pleased with the prospect of gratifying Mahomed Akber by the present.

After breakfast, Trevor, Lawrence, and myself were summoned to attend the Envoy during his conference with Mahomed Akber Khan. I found him alone, when, for the first time, he disclosed to me the nature of the transaction he was engaged in. I immediately warned him that it was a plot against him. He replied hastily, "A plot! let me alone for that, trust me for that!" and I consequently offered no further remonstrance. Sir William then arranged with General

Elphinstone that the 54th regiment, under Major Ewart, should be held in readiness for immediate service. The Shah's 6th, and two guns, were also warned. It is a curious circumstance, and betrays the unhappy vacillation of poor Elphinstone, that, after Sir William had actually quitted the cantonment in full expectation that every thing had been arranged according to his desire, he (the General) addressed a letter to him, which never reached him, remonstrating on the danger of the proposed attack, and strongly objecting to the employment of the two above regiments. About 12 o'clock Sir William, Trevor, Lawrence, and myself set forth on our ill-omened expedition. As we approached the Seah Sung gate, Sir William observed with much vexation that the troops were not in readiness, protesting at the same time, however, that, desperate as the proposed attempt was, it was better that it should be made, and that a thousand deaths were preferable to the life he had lately led.

After passing the gate, he remembered the horse which he had intended as a present for Akber, and sent me back for it. When I rejoined him, I found that the small number of the body guard who had accompanied him, had been ordered to halt, and that he, Trevor, and Lawrence had advanced in the direction of Mahmood

Khan's fort, being some 500 or 600 yards from the eastern rampart, and were there awaiting the approach of Mahomed Akber and his party, who now made their appearance. Close by were some hillocks, on the further side of which from the cantonment a carpet was spread where the snow lay least thick, and there the Khans and Sir William sat down to hold their conference. Men talk of presentiment, I suppose it was something of the kind which came over me, for I could scarcely prevail upon myself to quit my horse. I did so, however, and was invited to sit down among the Sirdars. After the usual salutations Mahomed Akber commenced business, by asking the Envoy if he was perfectly ready to carry into effect the proposition of the preceding night? The Envoy replied, "Why not?" My attention was then called off by an old Affghan acquaintance of mine, formerly chief of the Cabul police, by name Gholam Moyun-ood-deen. I rose from my recumbent posture, and stood apart with him conversing. I afterwards remembered that my friend betrayed much anxiety as to where my pistols were, and why I did not carry them on my person. I answered that although I wore my sword for form, it was not necessary at a friendly conference to be armed *cap-à-pie*. His discourse was also full of extravagant compli-

ments, I suppose for the purpose of lulling me to sleep. At length my attention was called off from what he was saying, by observing that a number of men, armed to the teeth, had gradually approached to the scene of conference, and were drawing round in a sort of circle. This Lawrence and myself pointed out to some of the chief men, who affected at first to drive them off with whips; but Mahomed Akber observed that it was of no consequence, as they were in the secret. I again resumed my conversation with Gholam Moyunood-deen, when suddenly I heard Mahomed Akber call out, "Begeer, begeer," (seize! seize!), and turning round, I saw him grasp the Envoy's left hand with an expression in his face of the most diabolical ferocity. I think it was Sultan Jan who laid hold of the Envoy's right hand. They dragged him in a stooping posture down the hillock, the only words I heard poor Sir William utter being, "Az barae Khooda" (for God's sake)! I saw his face however, and it was full of horror and astonishment. I did not see what became of Trevor, but Lawrence was dragged past me by several Affghans, whom I saw wrest his weapons from him. Up to this moment I was so engrossed in observing what was taking place, that I actually was not aware that my own right arm was mastered, that my urbane friend

held a pistol to my temple, and that I was surrounded by a circle of Ghazees with drawn swords and cocked juzails. Resistance was in vain, so, listening to the exhortations of Gholam Moyun-ood-deen, which were enforced by the whistling of divers bullets over my head, I hurried through the snow with him to the place where his horse was standing, being despoiled en route of my sabre, and narrowly escaping divers attempts made on my life. As I mounted behind my captor, now my energetic defender, the crowd increased around us, the cries of "Kill the Kafir" became more vehement, and, although we hurried on at a fast canter, it was with the utmost difficulty Gholam Moyun-ood-deen, although assisted by one or two friends or followers, could ward off and avoid the sword cuts aimed at me, the rascals being afraid to fire lest they should kill my conductor. Indeed he was obliged to wheel his horse round once, and, taking off his turban (the last appeal a Mussulman can make), to implore them for God's sake to respect the life of his friend. At last, ascending a shivery bank, the horse fell. My cap had been snatched off, and I now received a heavy blow on the head from a bludgeon, which fortunately did not quite deprive me of my senses. I had sufficient sense left to shoot ahead of the fallen horse, where my pro-

tector with another man joined me, and clasping me in their arms, hurried me towards the wall of Mahomed Khan's fort. How I reached the spot where Mahomed Akber was receiving the gratulations of the multitude I know not, but I remember a fanatic rushing on me and twisting his hand in my collar until I became exhausted from suffocation. I must do Mahomed Akber the justice to say, that, finding the Ghazees bent on my slaughter, even after I had reached his stirrup, he drew his sword and laid about him right manfully, for my conductor and Meerza Bâooden Khan were obliged to press me up against the wall, covering me with their own bodies, and protesting that no blow should reach me, but through their persons.

Pride, however, overcame Mahomed Akber's sense of courtesy, when he thought I was safe, for he then turned round to me, and repeatedly said in a tone of triumphant derision, "Shuma moolk-i-ma me geered!" (*You'll seize my country, will you!*) he then rode off, and I was hurried towards the gate of the fort. Here new dangers awaited me, for Moollah Momin, fresh from the slaughter of poor Trevor, who was killed riding close behind me, — Sooltan Jan having the credit of having given him the first sabre cut, — stood here with his followers, whom he exhorted to slay

me, setting them the example by cutting fiercely at me himself. Fortunately a gun stood between us, but still he would have effected his purpose, had not Mahomed Shah Khan at that instant, with some followers, come to my assistance. These drew their swords in my defence, the chief himself throwing his arm round my neck, and receiving on his shoulder a cut aimed by Moollah Momin at my head. During the bustle I pushed forward into the fort, and was immediately taken to a sort of dungeon, where I found Lawrence safe, but somewhat exhausted by his hideous ride and the violence he had sustained, although unwounded. Here the Gilje chiefs, Mahomed Shah Khan, and his brother Dost Mahomed Khan, presently joined us, and endeavoured to cheer up our flagging spirits, assuring us that the Envoy and Trevor were not dead, but on the contrary quite well. They staid with us during the afternoon, their presence being absolutely necessary for our protection. Many attempts were made by the fanatics to force the door to accomplish our destruction. Others spit at us and abused us through a small window, through which one fellow levelled a blunderbuss at us, which was struck up by our keepers and himself thrust back. At last Ameenooollah made his appearance, and threatened us with instant death.

Some of his people most officiously advanced to make good his word, until pushed back by the Giljye chiefs, who remonstrated with this iniquitous old monster, their master, whom they persuaded to relieve us from his hateful presence. During the afternoon, a human hand was held up in mockery to us at the window. We said that it had belonged to an European, but were not aware at the time that it was actually the hand of the poor Envoy. Of all the Mahomedans assembled in the room discussing the events of the day, one only, an old Moollah, openly and fearlessly condemned the acts of his brethren, declaring that the treachery was abominable, and a disgrace to Islam. At night they brought us food, and gave us each a postheen to sleep on. At midnight we were awakened to go to the house of Mahomed Akber in the city. Mahomed Shah Khan then, with the meanness common to all Affghans of rank, robbed Lawrence of his watch, while his brother did me a similar favour. I had been plundered of my rings and everything else previously, by the understrappers.

Reaching Mahomed Akber's abode, we were shown into the room where he lay in bed. He received us with great outward show of courtesy, assuring us of the welfare of the Envoy and Trevor, but there was a constraint in his manner for

which I could not recount. We were shortly taken to another apartment, where we found Skinner, who had returned, being on parole, early in the morning. Doubt and gloom marked our meeting, and the latter was fearfully deepened by the intelligence which we now received from our fellow captive of the base murder of Sir William and Trevor. He informed us that the head of the former had been carried about the city in triumph. We of course spent a miserable night. The next day we were taken under a strong guard to the house of Zeman Khan, where a council of the Khans was being held. Here we found Captains Conolly and Airey, who had some days previously been sent to the hurwah's house as hostage for the performance of certain parts of the treaty which was to have been entered into. A violent discussion took place, in which Mahomed Akber bore the most prominent part. We were vehemently accused of treachery, and every thing that was bad, and told that the whole of the transactions of the night previous had been a trick of Mahomed Akber and Amce-noollah, to ascertain the Envoy's sincerity. They declared that they would now grant us no terms, save on the surrender of the whole of the married families as hostages, all the guns, ammunition, and treasure. At this time Conolly told me

that on the preceding day the Envoy's head had been paraded about in the court yard; that his and Trevor's bodies had been hung up in the public bazar, or *chouk*; and that it was with the greatest difficulty that the old hurwah, Zuman Khan, had saved him and Airey from being murdered by a body of fanatics, who had attempted to rush into the room where they were. Also that previous to the arrival of Lawrence, Skinner, and myself, Mahomed Akber had been relating the events of the preceding day to the *Jeerga* or council, and that he had unguardedly avowed having, while endeavouring to force the Envoy either to mount on horseback or to move more quickly, *struck* him, and that, seeing Connolly's eye fastened upon him with an expression of intense indignation, he had altered the phrase and said, "I mean I *pushed* him." After an immense deal of gabble, a proposal for a renewal of the treaty, not however demanding all the guns, was determined to be sent to the cantonments, and Skinner, Lawrence, and myself were marched back to Akber's house, enduring *en route* all manner of threats and insults. Here we were closely confined in an inner apartment, which was indeed necessary for our safety. That evening we received a visit from Mahomed Akber, Sultan Jan, and several other Affghans. Mahomed

Akber exhibited his double barrellled pistols to us, which he had worn the previous day, requesting us to put their locks to rights, something being amiss. *Two of the barrels had been recently discharged*, which he endeavoured in a most confused way to account for by saying that he had been charged by a havildar of the escort and had fired both barrels at him. Now all the escort had run away without even attempting to charge, the only man who advanced to the rescue having been a Hindoo Jemadar of Chuprassies, who was instantly cut to pieces by the assembled Ghazees. This defence he made without any accusation on our part, betraying the anxiety of a liar to be believed. On the 26th, Capt Lawrence was taken to the house of Ameenoollah, whence he did not return to us. Capt Skinner and myself remained in Akber's house until the 30th. During this time we were civilly treated, and conversed with numbers of Affghan gentlemen who came to visit us. Some of them asserted that the Envoy had been murdered by the unruly soldiery. Others could not deny that Akber himself was the assassin. For two or three days we had a fellow-prisoner in poor Sirwar Khan, who had been deceived throughout the whole matter, and out of whom they were then endeavouring to screw money. He of course

was aware from his countrymen that not only had Akber committed the murder, but that he protested to the Ghazees that he gloried in the deed. On one occasion a moonshee of Major Pottinger, who had escaped from Charekhar, named Mohun Beer, came direct from the presence of Mahomed Akber to visit us. He told us that Mahomed Akber had begun to see the impolicy of having murdered the Envoy, which fact he had just avowed to him, shedding many tears either of pretended remorse, or of real vexation at having committed himself. On several occasions Mahomed Akber, personally and by deputy, besought Skinner and myself to give him advice, as to how he was to extricate himself from the dilemma in which he was placed, more than once endeavouring to excuse himself for not having effectually protected the Envoy, by saying that Sir William had drawn a sword stick upon him. It seems that meanwhile the renewed negotiations with Major Pottinger, who had assumed the Envoy's place in cantonments, had been brought to a head, for on the night of the 30th, Akber furnished me with an Affghan dress (Skinner already wore one) and sent us both back to cantonments. Several Affghans, with whom I fell in afterwards, protested to me that they had seen Mahomed Akber shoot the Envoy with his

own hand, amongst them Meerza Badoodeen Khan, who, being an old acquaintance, always retained a sneaking kindness for the English

I am, my dear Eyre, yours very truly,

C MACKENZIE

Cabul 29th July 1842

(True copy)

Vint Eyre Lieut. Bengal Artillery

Letter addressed by CAPTAIN G ST P LAWRENCE, late Military Secretary to the Envoy, to MAJOR E POTTINGER, C B, late in charge of the Cabul Mission

SIR,

IN compliance with your request, I have the honour to detail the particulars of my capture, and of the death of my ever to be lamented chief

On the morning of the 23d December, at 11 A M, I received a note from the late Sir W H Macnaghten, warning me to attend, with Captains Trevor and Mackenzie, an interview he was about to have with Sirdar Mahomed Akber Khan. Accordingly, with the above named officers, at about 12, I accompanied Sir William, having previously heard him tell Major-General Elphinstone to have two regiments of infantry and two guns ready for secret service. In passing through cantonments, on my observing that there

were more Affghans in cantonments than usual, or than I deemed safe, the Envoy directed one of his Affghan attendants to proceed and cause them all to leave, at the same time remarking, how strange it was that, although the General was fully acquainted with the then very critical state of affairs, no preparations appeared to have been made, adding, "however, it is all of a piece with the military arrangements throughout the siege." He then said, "There is not enough of the escort with us;" to which I replied, that he had only ordered eight or ten, but that I had brought sixteen, and that I would send for the remainder, which I accordingly did, asking Lieut. Le Geyt to bring them, and to tell Brigadier Shelton, who had expressed a wish to attend the next interview, that he might accompany them. On passing the gate, we observed some hundreds of armed Affghans within a few yards of it; on which I called to the officer on duty to get the reserve under arms, and brought outside to disperse them, and to send to the General to have the garrison on the alert. Towards Mahmood Khan's fort, were a number of armed Affghans, but we observed none nearer.

The Envoy now told us that he, on the night previous, had received a proposal from Sirdar Mahomed Akber Khan, to which he had agreed,

and that he had every reason to hope it would bring our present difficulties to an early and happy termination; that Mahomed Akber Khan was to give up Naib Ameenoollah Khan as a prisoner to us, for which purpose a regiment was to proceed to Mahmood Khan's fort, and another corps was to occupy the Bala Hissar. Sir William then warned me to be ready to gallop to the king with the intelligence of the approach of the regiment, and to acquaint him with Akber's proposal. On one of us remarking that the scheme seemed a dangerous one, and asking if he did not apprehend any treachery, he replied: "Dangerous it is, but, if it succeeds, it is worth all risks; the rebels have not fulfilled even one article of the treaty, and I have no confidence in them; and if by it we can only save our honour, all will be well, at any rate, I would rather suffer an hundred deaths, than live the last six weeks over again." We proceeded to near the usual spot, and met Sirdar Mahomed Akber Khan, who was accompanied by several Giljye chiefs, Mahomed Shah Khan, Dost Mahomed Khan, Khoda Bux Khan, Azad Khan, &c. After the usual salutations, the Envoy presented a valuable horse which Akber had asked for, and which had been that morning purchased from Capt. Grant for 3000 rupees. The Sirdar acknowledged the at-

tention, and expressed his thanks for a handsome brace of double-barelled pistols which the Envoy had purchased from me, and sent to him, with his carriage and pair of horses, the day before.

The party dismounted, and horse clothes were spread on a small hillock which partially concealed us from cantonments, and which was chosen, they said, as being free from snow. The Envoy threw himself on the bank with Mahomed Akber and Captains Trevor and Mackenzie beside him ; I stood behind Sir William, till, pressed by Dost Mahomed Khan, I knelt on one knee, having first called the Envoy's attention to the number of Affghans around us, saying that if the subject of the conference was of that secret nature I believed it to be, they had better be removed. He spoke to Mahomed Akber, who replied, "No, they are all in the secret." Hardly had he so said, when I found my arms locked, my pistols and sword wrenched from my belt, and myself forcibly raised from the ground and pushed along, Mahomed Shah Khan, who held me, calling out, "Come along, if you value your life." I turned, and saw the Envoy lying, his head where his heels had been, and his hands locked in Mahomed Akber's, consternation and horror depicted in his countenance. Seeing I could do nothing, I let myself be pulled on by

Mahomed Shah Khan. Some shots were fired and I was hurried to his horse, on which he jumped, telling me to get up behind, which I did, and we proceeded, escorted by several armed men who kept off a crowd of Ghazees, who sprang up on every side shouting for me to be given up for them to slay, cutting at me with their swords and knives, and poking me in the ribs with their guns: they were afraid to fire lest they should injure their chief. The horsemen kept them pretty well off, but not sufficiently so to prevent my being much bruised. In this manner we hurried towards Mahomed Khan's fort, near which we met some hundreds of horsemen who were keeping off the Ghazees, who here were in greater numbers, and more vociferous for my blood. We, however, reached the fort in safety, and I was pushed into a small room, Mahomed Shah Khan returning to the gate of the fort and bringing in Capt. Mackenzie, whose horse had there fallen. This he did, receiving a cut through his neencha (Scother coat) on his arm, which was aimed at that officer, who was ushered into the room with me much exhausted and bruised from blows on his head and body. We sat down with some soldiers who were put over us with a view to protect us from the mob, who now surrounded the house, and

who till dark continued execrating and spitting at us, calling on the men to give us up to be slaughtered.

One produced a hand (European) which appeared to have been recently cut off; another presented a blunderbuss, and was about to fire it, when it was knocked aside by one of our guard. Several of the Sirdars came in during the day, and told us to be assured that no harm should befall us; that the Envoy and Trevor were safe in the city (a falsehood, as will be afterwards seen). Naib Ameenollah Khan and his sons also came. The former, in great wrath, said that we either should be, or deserved to be, blown away from a gun. Mahomed Shah Khan and Dost Mahomed Khan begged he would not so talk, and took him out of the room. Towards night food was given to us, and postheens to sleep on: our watches, rings, and silk handkerchiefs were taken from us; but in all other respects we were unmolested. The followers of Mahomed Shah Khan repeatedly congratulated him on the events of the day, with one exception, viz. an old Moollah, who loudly exclaimed that "the name of the faithful was tarnished, and that in future no belief could be placed in them; that the deed was foul, and could never be of advantage to the authors." At midnight we were

taken through the city to the house of Mahomed Akber Khan, who received us courteously, lamenting the occurrences of the day here we found Captain Skinner, and for the first time heard the dreadful and astounding intelligence of the murder of the Envoy and Captain Trevor, and that our lamented chief's head had been paraded through the city in triumph, and his trunk, after being dragged through the streets, stuck up in the Char Chouk, the most conspicuous part of the town. Captain Skinner told us, that the report was, that on Mahomed Akber Khan's telling Sir Wilfrun to accompany him, he refused, resisted, and pushed the Sirdar from him, that in consequence he was immediately shot and his body cut to pieces by the Ghazees, that Captain Trevor had been conveyed behind Dost Mahomed Khan as far as Mahomed Khan's fort, where he was cut down, but that his body was not mangled, though carried in triumph through the city. On the following morning (21th) we (Captain Skinner, Mackenzie, and self) were taken to Nuwab Zuman Khan's house, escorted by Sultan Jan and other chiefs, to protect us from the Ghazees, there we met Captains Connolly and Airey (hostages) and all the rebel Sirdars assembled in council. The Envoy's death was lamented, but his conduct severely censured,

and it was said that now no faith could be placed in our words. A new treaty however was discussed, and sent to the General and Major Pottinger, and towards evening we returned as we came to Mahomed Akber's, where I remained a prisoner, but well and courteously treated, till the morning of the 26th, when I was sent to Naib Ameenollah Khan. On reaching his house I was ushered into his private apartment. The Naib received me kindly, showed me the Envoy's original letter in reply to Mahomed Akber's proposition, touching his being made Shah Shoojah's Wuzeer, receiving a lac of rupees on giving the Naib a prisoner to us, thirty lacs on the final settlement of the insurrection, &c. To this the Naib added that the Envoy had told Mahomed Akber's cousin that a lac of rupees would be given for his (Ameenollah Khan's) head. I promptly replied "'tis false," that Sir William had never done so, that it was utterly foreign and repugnant to his nature, and to British usage. The Naib expressed himself in strong terms against the Envoy, contrasting his own fair and open conduct with that of Sir William. He told me that General Elphinstone and Major Pottinger had begged I might be released, as my presence was necessary to enable them to prepare bills on India, which it had been arranged the

Sirdars were to get After some delay, consequent on my asking for Captain Mackenzie to be released with me, and Mahomed Akber's stoutly refusing the release of either of us, I was sent into cantonments on the morning of the 29th, escorted by the Naib's eldest son and a strong party of horse and foot, being disguised as an Affghan for my greater protection I must here record that nothing could exceed the Naib's kindness and attention to me while under his roof

I have, &c &c

(Signed) G St P LAWRENCE

Military Secretary to the late Envoy and Minister

Camp Zoudah

Ten miles south of Tezeen

10th May 1849

(True copy)

Vint Eyre Lieut Regd Artillery

CHAP. IX.

HOW WE AVENGED HIM! — COUNCIL OF WAR. — TERMS
ACCEPTED. — HOSTAGES GIVEN. — POSTPONEMENT OF
DEPARTURE.

BUT what were our troops about all this time? Were no steps taken to rescue the Envoy and his friends from their perilous position? Where was the body-guard which followed them from cantonments?— These questions will naturally occur to all who read the foregoing pages, and I wish it were in my power to render satisfactory answers.

The body-guard had only got a few hundred yards from the gate in their progress to the scene of conference, when they suddenly faced about and came galloping back, several shots being fired at them in their retreat. Lieut. Le Geyt, in passing through the gate, exclaimed that the Envoy had been carried off, and it was believed that, finding his men would not advance to the rescue, he came back for assistance. But the intelligence he brought, instead of rousing our leaders to instant action, seemed to paralyze their faculties; and, although it was evident that our Envoy had been basely entrapped, if not actually murdered,

before our very gate, and though even now crowds of Affghans, horse and foot, were seen passing and repassing to and fro in hostile array, between Mahomed's fort and the place of meeting, not a gun was opened upon them, not a soldier was stirred from his post, no sortie was apparently even thought of, treachery was allowed to triumph in open day, the murder of a British Envoy was perpetrated in the face and within musket shot of a British army, and not only was no effort made to avenge the dastardly deed, but the body was left lying on the plain to be mangled and insulted, and finally carried off to be paraded in the public market by a ruffianly mob of fanatical barbarians.

Intense was the anxiety and wretched the suspense felt by all during the rest of the day. A number of Affghans, who were trafficking in cantonments at the time of the conference, on hearing the report of fire-arms in that direction, endeavoured to escape, but were detained by the officer at the gate. No certain tidings regarding the Envoy could be obtained—many confidently affirmed that he was alive and unharmed in Mahomed's fort, but Lieut Warren stoutly maintained that he had kept his eye upon Sir William from the moment of his leaving the gate, and had distinctly seen him fall to the ground, and the

Affghans hacking at his body. The agony of his poor wife during this dread interval of suspense may be imagined.

December 24th. — The fate of the Envoy and his three companions remained a mystery, until the arrival of a note from Capt. Conolly notifying his death and that of Capt. Trevor, and the safety of Capts. Lawrence and Mackenzie.

The two latter officers had been that morning escorted to a conference of chiefs at the house of Nuwab Zuman Khan, where the late Envoy's conduct was severely commented on; but his death was nevertheless lamented. The treaty was again discussed; and, after a few alterations and additions had been made, it was sent to Gen. Elphinstone, with an explanation of the breach of faith which had cost the Envoy his life.

Gen. Elphinstone now requested Major Pottinger to assume the office of political agent and adviser, which, though still suffering greatly from his wound, and incapacitated from active bodily exertion, that gallant officer's strict sense of public duty forbade him to decline, although he plainly perceived our affairs to be so irretrievably ruined, as to render the distinction anything but enviable, or likely to improve his hardly-earned fame.

The additional clauses in the treaty now pro-

posed for our renewed acceptance were — 1st. That we should leave behind all our guns, excepting six. 2nd. That we should immediately give up all our treasures. 3rd. That the hostages should be all exchanged for married men, with their wives and families — The difficulties of Major Pottinger's position will be readily perceived, when it is borne in mind that he had before him the most conclusive evidence of the late Envoy's ill advised intrigue with Mahomed Akber Khan, in direct violation of that very treaty, which was now once more tendered for consideration.

December 25th. — A more cheerless Christmas-day perhaps never dawned upon British soldiers in a strange land, and the few whom the force of habit urged to exchange the customary greetings of the season, did so with countenances and in tones indicative of anything but merriment. At night there was an alarm, and the drum beat to arms, but nothing occurred of any consequence.

December 26th. — Letters were received from Capt. Mackeson, political agent at Peshawur, announcing the march of strong reinforcements from India. An offer was made by Mahomed Osman Khan to escort us all safe to Peshawur for five lacs of rupees, and shortly after this the

Naib Ameer arrived, with a verbal agreement to certain amendments which had been proposed in the treaty by Major Pottinger. He was accompanied by a Cashmeer merchant and several Hindoo shroffs, for the purpose of negotiating bills to the amount of fourteen lacs of rupees, payable to the several chiefs on the promise of the late Envoy.

Major Pottinger being altogether averse from the payment of this money, and indeed strongly opposed to any treaty binding the Indian government to a course of policy, which it might find inconvenient to adopt, a council of war was convened by the General, consisting of himself, Brigadiers Shelton and Anquetil, Col. Chambers, Capt. Bellew, Assist. Qr.-Mast.-Gen., and Capt. Grant, Assist. Adjt.-Gen. In the presence of this council, Major Pottinger declared his conviction that no confidence could be placed in any treaty formed with the Affghan chiefs; that, under such circumstances, to bind the hands of government, by promising to evacuate the country, and to restore the deposed Ameer, and to waste moreover so much public money, merely to save our own lives and property, would be inconsistent with the duty we owed our country and the government we served; and that the only honourable course would be either to hold out to the

last at Cabul, or to force our immediate retreat to Jellalabad.

This, however, the officers composing the council, one and all, declared to be impracticable, owing to the want of provisions, the surrender of the surrounding forts, and the insuperable difficulties of the road at the present season, they therefore deemed it preferable to pay any sum of money, rather than sacrifice the whole force in a hopeless prolongation of hostilities. It was accordingly determined, *nem con*, that Major Pottinger should at once renew the negotiations which had been commenced by Sir William Macnaghten, and that the sums promised to the chiefs by that functionary previous to his murder should be paid.

Major Pottinger's objections being thus overruled, the tendered treaty was forthwith accepted, and a requisition was made for the release of Capt Lawrence, whose presence was necessary to prepare the bills on India. Four married hostages, with their wives and children, being required by the chiefs, a circular was sent round, to ascertain if that number would volunteer to remain, a salary of 2000 rupees per month being guaranteed to each, as an inducement.

Such, however, was the horror entertained of Afghun treachery since the late tragical occur-

rence, that some officers went so far as to say they would sooner shoot their wives at once, than commit them to the charge of men who had proved themselves devoid of common honour and humanity. There were, in fact, but one or two who consented to stay, if the General considered that by so doing they would benefit the public service.

December 27th. — The chiefs were informed that it was contrary to the usages of war to give up ladies as hostages, and that the General could not consent to an arrangement which would brand him with perpetual disgrace in his own country.

December 29th. — The Naib Ameer came in from the city with Capt. Lawrence and the shroffs, when the bills were prepared without farther delay. Capts. Drummond, Walsh, Warburton, and Webb, having been accepted as hostages, were sent to join Capts. Conolly and Airey at the house of Nuwab Zuman Khan. A portion of the sick and wounded, amongst whom was Lieut. Haughton of the Goorkha regiment, were likewise conveyed to the city, and placed under the protection of the chiefs. Three of the Shah's guns, with the greater portion of our treasure, were made over during the day, much to the evident disgust of the soldiery.

December 30th. — The remainder of the sick

went into the city, Lieut. Evans, H. M.'s 44th foot, being placed in command, and Dr. Campbell, 54th N. I., with Dr. Berwick of the Mission, in medical charge of the whole. Two more of the Shah's guns were given up. It snowed hard the whole day. A crowd of armed Giljyes and Ghazees took up a threatening position close to the eastern gate, and even attempted to force an entrance into cantonments. Much annoyance was daily experienced from these people, who were in the habit of plundering the peaceable dealers, who flocked in from the city with grain and forage, the moment they issued from the cantonments; they even committed frequent assaults on our Sepoys, and orders to fire on them on such occasions were repeatedly solicited in vain, although it was well known that the chiefs themselves advised us to do so, and the General had given Brigadier Shelton positive instructions to that effect, whenever circumstances might render it advisable. The consequence was that our soldiers were daily constrained to endure the most insulting and contemptuous taunts and treatment, from fellows whom a single charge of bayonets would have scattered like chaff, but who were emboldened by the apparent tameness of our troops, which they doubtless attributed to the want of common pluck, rather than to the re-

straints of discipline. Capts. Mackenzie and Skinner obtained their release this evening, the latter officer having, since the outbreak of the rebellion, passed through some curious adventures, in the disguise of an Affghan female.

January 5th. — Affairs continued in the same unsettled state until this date. The chiefs postponed our departure from day to day on divers pretexts. It had been agreed that Nuwab Jubbar Khan should escort us to Jellalabad with about 2000 followers, who were to be entertained for that purpose.

It is supposed that, up to the very last, the majority of chiefs doubted the reality of our intention to depart: and many, fearful of the civil discords for which our retreat would be the signal, would have gladly detained us at Cabul. Attempts were made continually by Akber Khan to wean the Hindoostanees from their allegiance, and to induce them to desert. Numerous cautions were received from various well-wishers, to place no confidence in the professions of the chiefs, who had sworn together to accomplish our entire destruction. Shah Shoojah himself sent more than one solemn warning, and, finding we were bent on taking our own course, used his utmost endeavours to persuade Lady Macnaghten to take advantage of his protection in the Bala

HISAR. He also appealed to Brigadier Anquetil, who commanded the Shāh's force, "if it were well to forsake him in the hour of need, and to deprive him of the aid of that force, which he had hitherto been taught to consider as his own?" All was however unavailing. The General and his council of war had determined that go we must, and go we accordingly did.

In the foregoing chapters I have offered what I honestly believe to be a faithful narration of the dismal train of events which preceded the evacuation of Cabul, and the abandonment of Shāh Shoojah, by the British army. In taking a retrospective view of those unprecedented occurrences, it is evident that our reverses may be mainly attributed to a lack of ordinary foresight and penetration on the part of the chief military and civil authorities, on their first entering on the occupation of this country, a country whose innumerable fortified strongholds and difficult mountain passes, in the hands of a proud and warlike population, never really subdued nor reconciled to our rule, though unable to oppose the march of a disciplined army through their land, ought to have induced a more than common de-

gree of vigilance and circumspection, in making adequate provision against any such popular outbreak as might have been anticipated, and did actually occur. But, instead of applying his undeniable talents to the completion of that conquest, which gained him an illustrious title and a wide renown, Lord Keane contented himself with the superficial success, which attended his progress through a country hitherto untraversed by an European army, since the classic days of *Alexander the Great*; he hurried off, with too great eagerness to enjoy the applause which awaited him in England, and left to his successors the far more arduous task of securing in their grasp the unwieldy prize, of which he had obtained the nominal possession.

On his return to India, Lord Keane took with him a large portion of the Bengal force, with which he had arrived at Cabul; the *whole* of the Bombay troops made a simultaneous homeward movement; and the army, with which he had entered Affghanistan, was thus reduced to a miserable moiety, before any steps had been taken to guard against surprise by the erection of a stronghold on the approved principles of modern warfare, or the establishment of a line of military posts to keep open our communications with India, on which country the army must ne-

cessarily for a long time have been entirely dependent for the munitions of war. The distance from Cabul to Ferozepore, our nearest Indian station, is about 600 miles. Between Cabul and Peshawur occur the stupendous and dangerous defiles of Khoord Cabul, Tezeen, Purreedurrah, Jugdulsuk, and Kyber, throughout whose whole extent food and forage are procurable only at long intervals, and even then with much difficulty.

From Peshawur to Ferozepore is the Punjab, or country of the Seiks, traversed by five great rivers, and occupied by a powerful nation, on whose precise professions no reliance could be placed. Along this extended line of communication Lord Keane established but one small solitary post, in the fort of Ali Musjed, in the heart of the Khyber pass. He left behind him, in fact, an army, whose isolated position and reduced strength offered the strongest possible temptation to a proud and restless race, to rally their scattered tribes in one grand effort to regain their lost independence.

In Lord Keane's successors may be seen the same disposition to be too easily satisfied with the outward semblance of tranquillity. Another brigade was ere long withdrawn from a force already insufficient for any great emergency, nor

was their position for *holding* in subjection a vanquished people much improved by their establishment in an ill-situated and ill-constructed cantonment, with their commissariat stores separated from their lines of defence. To the latter mentioned error may be mainly attributed the evacuation of Cabul and the destruction of the army; for there can be no doubt that, notwithstanding all the difficulties of our position, and the incompetence of our commanders, had the cantonments been well supplied with provisions, the troops could have easily held out until the arrival of reinforcements from India. The real cause of our retreat was, beyond all question, *famine*. We were not *driven*, but *starved*, out of Cabul; and although, in my relation of our military transactions, I have been compelled by a regard to truth unwillingly to record proceedings which must be condemned by all, I do not the less feel most sensibly that every allowance ought in common justice to be made for men who from the very commencement of the conflict saw the combined horrors of starvation and a rigorous winter frowning in their face,—no succours within reach,—their retreat cut off,—and all their sanguinary efforts either altogether fruitless, or at best deferring for a few short days the ruin which on every side threatened to overwhelm them.

In connection with this subject, I may be excused for quoting, in conclusion, the powerful reasoning of a recent writer in the *Bombay Times* : —

“ When a soldier finds that his every movement is directed by a master mind; that, when he is apparently thrust into the greatest danger, he finds, in truth, his greatest security; that his march to engage an apparently superior force is not a wild sacrifice, but the result of a well-calculated plan; when he knows that, however appearances may be, he is sure to come off with honour, for his brethren in arms are already in progress to assist him, and will not fail to be forthcoming at the hour appointed; when he sees that there is a watchful eye over him, providing for all his wants, assisting him to overcome all his difficulties, and enabling him to reap the fruit of all his successes; when he finds that even retreat is but a preparation for victory, and, as if guided by Providence, all his movements, though to him incomprehensible, are sure to prove steps to some great end; — when the soldier finds this, he rises and lies down in security, and there is no danger which he will not brave. But when, in every thing they undertake, they find the reverse of the picture I have drawn; when they are marched, as they imagine to glory, but find it is only to

slaughter ; when even victory brings no fruit, and retreat they discover to be flight ; when the support they hope for comes not, and they find their labours to be without end or purpose ; when the provisions they look for daily are issued to them no more, and they see all their efforts paralysed ; when an army of thousands finds itself delivered, bound hand and foot, into the hands of a man without system, foresight, or military knowledge enough for a sergeant of police, the stoutest heart will fail, the bravest sink ; for the soldier knows that, do what he will, his efforts can only end in ruin and dishonour."

CHAP. X.

THE RETREAT OF THE ARMY, AND ITS ANNIBILATION

January 6th — AT last the fatal morning dawned which was to witness the departure of the Cabul force from the cantonments, in which it had sustained a two months' siege, to encounter the miseries of a winter march through a country of perhaps unparalleled difficulty, where every mountain defile, if obstinately defended by a determined enemy, must inevitably prove the grave of hundreds.

Dreary indeed was the scene, over which, with drooping spirits and dismal forebodings, we had to bend our unwilling steps. Deep snow covered every inch of mountain and plain with one unspotted sheet of dazzling white, and so intensely bitter was the cold, as to penetrate and defy the defences of the warmest clothing.

No signs of the promised escort appeared; but in early hour the preparations commenced for our march. A cut was made through the eastern rampart, to open an additional passage for the troops and baggage, a sufficient number of gun

waggons and platform planks were taken down to the river for the formation of a temporary bridge, and every available camel and yaboo (the whole amounting to 2000) was laden with military stores, commissariat supplies, and such small proportion of camp-equipage as was indispensably necessary to shelter the troops in a climate of extraordinary rigour.

The strength of the whole force at this time was, so far as can now be ascertained, very nearly as follows:—

1 troop of horse artillery	-	-	90	} 690 Europeans.
H. M.'s 44th foot	-	-	600	
5th regt. light cavalry, 2 squad.	-	-	260	} 970 cavalry.
5th Shah's irreg. do. (Anderson's)	-	-	500	
Skinner's horse, 1 ressala	-	-	70	
4th irreg. do. 1 do.	-	-	70	
Mission escort, or body-guard	-	-	70	} 2840.
5th native infantry	-	-	700	
37th do.	-	-	600	
54th do.	-	-	650	
6th Shah's infantry	-	-	600	
Sappers and miners	-	-	20	
Shah's do.	-	-	240	
Half the mountain train	-	-	30	} Total - 4500 fighting men.
6 horse artillery guns.				
3 mountain train do.				

Besides the above, the camp followers amounted, at a very moderate computation, to about 12,000 men, besides women and children. These proved

from the very first mile a serious clog upon our movements, and were, indeed, the main cause of our subsequent misfortunes. It is to be devoutly hoped that every future commander-in-chief of the Indian army will adopt decisive measures, to prevent a force employed on field service from being ever again afflicted with such a curse.

The order of march was as follows:—

H. M.'s 44th foot	-	-	-	} The advance, under Brigadier Anquetil
Sappers and miners	-	-	-	
Irreg horse, 1 squad	-	-	-	
3 mountain train guns	-	-	-	
The escort, with the ladies	-	-	-	} Main column, under Brigadier Shelton
The invalids and sick	-	-	-	
2 horse artillery guns	-	-	-	
Anderson's irreg horse	-	-	-	
37th native infantry, with treasure	-	-	-	
5th native infantry, with baggage	-	-	-	} Rear-guard, under Col Chambers
54th native infantry	-	-	-	
6th Shah's infantry	-	-	-	
5th light cavalry	-	-	-	
4 horse artillery guns	-	-	-	

All being ready at 9 A.M., the advance commenced moving out. At this time not a single Affghan was to be seen in any direction, and the peaceable aspect of affairs gave rise to strong hopes that the chiefs intended to remain true to their engagements.

At 10 A.M. a message was brought from Nuwab Jubbar Khan, requesting us to defer our

départure another day, as his escort was not yet ready to accompany us. By this time, however, the greater part of the force was in motion, and a crowd of Affghans, who had issued from the village of Beymaroo, impatient for plunder, had forced their way into the northern cantonment, or mission compound (which, owing to some mistake, had been evacuated too soon by the Shah's 6th infantry), and were busily engaged in the work of pillage and destruction. The advance was delayed for upwards of an hour at the river, having found the temporary bridge incomplete; and it was noon ere the whole had crossed over, leaving a clear road for the main column to follow.

The order of march, in which the troops started, was, however, soon lost, and the camp followers with the public and private baggage, once out of cantonments, could not be prevented from mixing themselves up with the troops, to the utter confusion of the whole column.

The main body, with its long train of laden camels, continued to pour out of the gate until the evening, by which time thousands of Affghans, the majority of whom were fanatical Ghazees, thronged the whole area of cantonments, rending the air with their exulting cries, and committing every kind of atrocity. The rear-guard, being

unable to restrain them, was obliged to provide for its own safety by taking up a position outside on the plain, where a great quantity of the baggage had been brought to a stand still at the canal (within 150 yards of the gate), whose slippery sides afforded no safe footing for the beasts of burden. The bridge across the river, being by this time impracticable, occasioned additional delay.

The Affghans, who had hitherto been too busily engaged in the work of plunder and destruction to take much notice of the troops, now began to line the ramparts, and annoy them with a mischievous fire of juzails, under which many fell, and it became necessary, for the preservation of those who remained, to spike and abandon two of the horse artillery guns.

Night had now closed around, but the Ghazees having fired the residency and almost every other building in the cantonment, the conflagration illuminated the surrounding country for several miles, presenting a spectacle of fearful sublimity. In the mad fervour of their religious zeal, these ignorant fanatics even set fire to the gun carriages belonging to the various pieces of ordnance, which we had left in position round the works, of whose use the Affghan chiefs were thus luckily deprived. The General had been often urged to destroy these

guns, rather than suffer them to fall into the enemy's hands, but he considered that it would have been a breach of the treaty to do so. Before the rear-guard commenced its march, Lieut. Hardyman of the 5th light cavalry, with fifty rank and file, were stretched lifeless on the snow. Much baggage was abandoned at starting, and much was plundered on the road. Scores of worn-out Sepoys and camp followers lined the way, having sat down in despair to perish in the snow. It was 2 A. M. ere the rear-guard reached camp at Bygram, a distance of only five miles. Here all was confusion. The tents had been pitched without the slightest regard to regularity, those of different regiments being huddled together in one intricate mass, mixed up with baggage, camp-followers, camels, and horses, in a way which beggars description. The flimsy canvass of the soldiers' tents was but a poor protection from the cold, which towards morning became more and more intense; and thousands of poor wretched creatures were obliged to lie down on the bare snow, without either shelter, fire, or food. Several died during the night; amongst whom was an European conductor of ordnance.

About twenty juzailchees, who still held faithfully by Capt. Mackenzie, suffered less than the rest, owing to their systematic mode of pro-

ceeding. Their first step on reaching the ground was to clear a small space from the snow, where they then laid themselves down in a circle, closely packed together, with their feet meeting in the centre; all the warm clothing they could muster among them being spread equally over the whole. By these simple means sufficient animal warmth was generated to preserve them from being frost-bitten; and Capt. Mackenzie, who himself shared their homely bed, declared that he had felt scarcely any inconvenience from the cold. It was different with our Sepoys and camp followers, who, having had no former experience of such hardships, were ignorant how they might best provide against them, and the proportion of those who escaped, without suffering in some degree from frost-bites, was very small. Yet this was but the *beginning* of sorrows!

January 7th. — At 8 A.M. the force moved off in the reverse order of yesterday — if that could be called *order* which consisted of a mingled mob of soldiers, camp-followers, and baggage-cattle, preserving not even the faintest semblance of that regularity and discipline, on which depended our only chance of escape from the dangers which threatened us. Even at this early stage of the retreat scarcely one half of the Sepoys were fit for duty; hundreds had, from sheer inability to

keep their ranks, joined the non-combatants, and thus increased the confusion. As for the Shah's 6th inf., it was no where to be found; only a few straggling files were perceptible here and there; and it was generally believed that the majority of the regiment had absconded during the night to Cabul.

At starting, large clods of hardened snow adhered so firmly to the hoofs of our horses, that a chisel and hammer would have been requisite to dislodge them. The very air we breathed froze in its passage out of the mouth and nostrils, forming a coating of small icicles on our moustaches and beards.

The advance proceeded onward without molestation, though numerous small bodies of Affghan horse and foot were observed hanging about our flanks, and moving in a parallel direction with ourselves. These were at first supposed to form a part of our escort, but the mistake was soon discovered by their attacking the rear-guard, commanded by Brigadier Anquetil, consisting of H. M.'s 44th, Lieut. Green's mountain train guns, and a squadron of irregular horse. Much baggage fell into the enemy's hands, who, though in some degree kept in check by the guns, exhibited a bold front, and maintained a harassing fire on our troops, whose movements were terribly crip-

pled by the disorderly multitude that thronged the road in front. The latter being for several minutes brought to a stand-still by a deep water-cut which intersected the road, the mountain-train guns endeavoured to pass clear of them by making a short detour, in doing which they got separated from the infantry, and — one happening at this unlucky moment to upset — the enemy seized the opportunity to rush forward and capture them, before H. M.'s 44th, who saw too late their awkward predicament, could render effectual assistance.

Their re-capture might still have been effected, could the soldiers have been prevailed upon to make the attempt, a gallant example being shown them by Lieut. Green and his few artillerymen, who made a sudden charge upon the foe and spiked the guns, but, not being supported, were obliged a second time to abandon them. Lieut. White, the Adjutant of H. M.'s 44th, received a severe wound through the face on this occasion.

Brigadier Anquetil now sent to the front for reinforcements, which, however, it was found impracticable to furnish, from the crowded state of the road. The Affghan horse shortly after this charged into the very midst of the column of baggage, and carried off large quantities of plunder, creating the greatest confusion and dismay.

Numbers fell from wounds, and still greater numbers from mere bodily weakness produced by cold, fasting, and fatigue. It was found necessary to spike and abandon two more horse-artillery guns, which the horses were found perfectly incapable of dragging any further through the deep snow.

On the arrival of the advance at Bootkhak, the General, having been informed that the rear was in danger of being entirely cut off, ordered a halt, and sent back all the troops that could be spared, together with the two remaining guns, to drive off the enemy, who had now assembled in great numbers in the rear, and were proceeding to crown some heights on the right commanding the road. This was, however, prevented by our troops under Brigadier Shelton, who took possession of the nearer heights, and kept the enemy in check for upwards of an hour. On this occasion, Lieut. Shaw, of the 54th N. I., was wounded severely in the thigh. Meanwhile Capt. Skinner had fallen in with a follower of Mahomed Akber Khan, from whom having learned that the chief was encamped near at hand, he accompanied the man to his master's presence. Mahomed Akber now informed Captain Skinner that he had been sent by the chiefs to escort us to Jellalabad, and declared that we had been attacked in consequence of having marched contrary to their wishes. He

insisted on our halting at Bootkhak till the following morning, in which case he would provide food, forage, and firewood for the troops, but he said that he should expect six hostages to insure our not marching beyond Tezeen, before tidings should be received of Gen Sale's evacuation of Jellalabad, for which an order had been already despatched to that officer, in compliance with the stipulations of the treaty.

These terms having been agreed to, the firing ceased for the present, and the force came to a halt on some high ground near the entrance of the Khoord Cabul pass, having in two days accomplished a distance of only ten miles from Cabul.

Here, again, the confusion soon became indescribable. Suffice it to say that an immense multitude of from 14,000 to 16,000 men, with several hundred cavalry horses and baggage cattle, were closely jammed together in one monstrous, unmanageable, jumbling mass. Night again closed over us, with its attendant train of horrors, — starvation, cold, exhaustion, death, and of all deaths I can imagine none more agonising than that, where a nipping frost tortures every sensitive limb, until the tenacious spirit itself sinks under the exquisite extreme of human suffering.

January 8th — At an early hour the treacherous

Affghans again commenced to molest us with their fire, and several hundreds having assembled in hostile array to the south of the camp, the troops were drawn up in expectation of an attack. Major Thain, putting himself at the head of the 44th foot, and exhorting the men to follow him, led them boldly on to the attack; but the enemy did not think proper to await the shock of bayonets, and effected a hasty retreat. In this business it is satisfactory to be able to state that H. M.'s 44th foot behaved with a resolution and gallantry worthy of British soldiers, and plainly proved that, under an able and judicious leader, they could yet redeem their injured reputation.

Capt. Skinner again went to communicate with Mahomed Akber Khan, who demanded that Major Pottinger and Capts. Lawrence and Mackenzie should immediately be made over to him, which was accordingly done, and hostilities again ceased; the Sirdar promising to send forward some influential men to clear the pass from the Giljyes, who occupied it, and were lying in wait for our approach. Once more the living mass of men and animals was in motion. At the entrance of the pass an attempt was made to separate the troops from the non-combatants, which was but partially successful, and created considerable delay.

The rapid effects of two nights' exposure to the frost in disorganising the force can hardly be conceived. It had so nipped the hands and feet of even the strongest men, as to completely prostrate their powers and incapacitate them for service, even the cavalry, who suffered less than the rest, were obliged to be lifted on their horses. In fact only a few hundred serviceable fighting men remained.

The idea of threading the stupendous pass before us, in the face of an armed tribe of blood-thirsty barbarians, with such a dense irregular multitude, was frightful, and the spectacle then presented by that waving sea of animated beings, the majority of whom a few fleeting hours would transform into a line of lifeless carcasses to guide the future traveller on his way, can never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. We had so often been deceived by Afghan professions, that little or no confidence was placed in the present truce, and we commenced our passage through the dreaded pass in no very sanguine temper of mind. This truly formidable defile is about five miles from end to end, and is shut in on either hand by a line of lofty hills, between whose precipitous sides the sun at this season could dart but a momentary ray. Down the centre dashed a mountain torrent, whose impetuous course the

frost in vain attempted to arrest, though it succeeded in lining the edges with thick layers of ice, over which the snow lay consolidated in slippery masses, affording no very easy footing for our jaded animals. This stream we had to cross and recross about eight-and-twenty times. As we proceeded onwards, the defile gradually narrowed, and the Giljyes were observed hastening to crown the heights in considerable force. A hot fire was opened on the advance, with whom were several ladies, who, seeing their only chance was to keep themselves in rapid motion, galloped forward at the head of all, running the gauntlet of the enemy's bullets, which whizzed in hundreds about their ears, until they were fairly out of the pass. Providentially the whole escaped, with the exception of Lady Sale, who received a slight wound in the arm. It ought, however, to be mentioned, that several of Mahomed Akber's chief adherents, who had preceded the advance, exerted themselves strenuously to keep down the fire; but nothing could restrain the Giljyes, who seemed fully determined that nobody should interfere to disappoint them of their prey. Onward moved the crowd into the thickest of the fire, and fearful was the slaughter that ensued. An universal panic speedily prevailed, and thousands, seeking refuge in flight, hurried forward to the

front, abandoning baggage, arms, ammunition, women, and children, regardless for the moment of every thing but their own lives.

The rear-guard, consisting of H. M.'s 44th and 54th N. I., suffered severely; and at last, finding that delay was only destruction, they followed the general example, and made the best of their way to the front. Another horse-artillery gun was abandoned, and the whole of its artillerymen slain. Capt. Anderson's eldest girl, and Capt. Boyd's youngest boy, fell into the hands of the Affghans. It is supposed that 3000 souls perished in the pass, amongst whom were Capt. *Paton*, Assist.-Qr.-Mast-Gen., and Lieut. *St. George*, 37th N. I.; Majors *Griffiths*, 37th N. I., and *Scott*, H. M.'s 44th; Capts. *Bott*, 5th cavalry, and *Troup*, Brigade-Major, Shah's force. Dr. *Cardew* and Lieut. *Sturt*, engineers, were wounded, the latter mortally. This fine young officer had nearly cleared the defile when he received his wound, and would have been left on the ground to be hacked to pieces by the Ghazees, who followed in the rear to complete the work of slaughter, but for the generous intrepidity of Lieut. *Mein* of H. M.'s 13th light infantry, who, on learning what had befallen him, went back to his succour, and stood by him for several minutes, at the imminent risk of his own life, vainly en-

treating aid from the passers by. He was at length joined by Sergt. Deane of the Sappers, with whose assistance he dragged his friend on a quilt through the remainder of the pass, when he succeeded in mounting him on a miserable pony, and conducted him in safety to camp, where the unfortunate officer lingered till the following morning, and was the only man of the whole force who received Christian burial. Lieut. Mein was himself at this very time suffering from a dangerous wound in the head received in the previous October, and his heroic disregard of self, and fidelity to his friend in the hour of danger, are well deserving of a record in the annals of British valour and virtue.

On the force reaching Khoord-Cabul, snow began to fall, and continued till morning. Only four small tents were saved, of which one belonged to the General: two were devoted to the ladies and children, and one was given up to the sick; but an immense number of poor wounded wretches wandered about the camp destitute of shelter, and perished during the night. Groans of misery and distress assailed the ear from all quarters. We had ascended to a still colder climate than we had left behind, and were without tents, fuel, or food: the snow was the only bed for all, and of many, ere morning, it proved the *winding-sheet*.

It is only marvellous that any should have survived that fearful night !

January 9th — Another morning dawned, awakening thousands to increased misery, and many a wretched survivor cast looks of envy at his comrades, who lay stretched beside him in the quiet sleep of death. Daylight was the signal for a renewal of that confusion which attended every movement of the force. The General had intended us to march at 10 A. M., but a large portion of the troops, with nearly all the camp followers, moved off without orders at 8 A. M., and had advanced about a mile from the camp, when they were recalled by the General, in consequence of a communication from Mahomed Akber Khan, who promised to use every endeavour to furnish us with supplies, but strongly recommended us to halt until he could make some proper arrangements for escorting us down safely. There can be no doubt that the general feeling in camp was adverse to a halt, there being scarcely even a native soldier, who did not plainly perceive that our only chance of escape consisted in moving on as fast as possible. This additional delay, therefore, and prolongation of their sufferings in the snow, of which one more march would have carried them clear, made a very unfavourable impression on the minds of the native soldiery, who now

for the first time began very generally to entertain the idea of deserting; nor is it at all astonishing that these symptoms should have first developed themselves amongst the Shah's native cavalry, who were, for the most part, exceedingly young soldiers, and foresaw full well the fatal result of all these useless and pernicious delays. The love of life is strong in every breast.

These men had hitherto behaved remarkably well, notwithstanding the numerous efforts that had been made to detach them from their duty; and, if their fealty at last gave place to the instinct of self-preservation, be it remembered in their favour, that it was not until the position of the force, of which they formed a part, had become altogether desperate beyond the reach of cure.

Towards noon Capt. Skinner arrived in camp with a proposition from Mahomed Akber Khan that all the widowed ladies and married families, whose destitute situation in camp rendered them objects of universal pity and sympathy, should at once be made over to his protection, to preserve them from further hardships and dangers; in this case he promised to escort them down safely, keeping them one day's march in rear of the army. The General, though not himself disposed to place much confidence in Mahomed Akber

friendly professions, was strongly recommended by Capt Skinner to trust him on the present occasion, as he felt assured that such a mark of confidence would be attended with happy results to the whole force. Anxious at all events to save the ladies and children from further suffering, the General gave his consent to the arrangement, and told Capt Skinner to prepare all the married officers and ladies to depart immediately with a party of Affghan horse, who were in waiting to receive them *. His intention also was that all the wounded officers in camp should have had the option of availing themselves of the same opportunity to seek Mahomed Akber's protection, but the others were hurried off by the Affghans before this had become generally known, and only two were in time to join them †

Up to this time scarcely one of the ladies had tasted a meal since leaving Cabul. Some had infants a few days old at the breast, and were unable to stand without assistance. Others were so far advanced in pregnancy, that, under ordinary cir-

* See Appendix A No 3

† These were Capt Troup, Brigade-Major Shah's force, and Lieut Mein H M's 13th Light Inf, who went as Lady Sale's protector

Lieuts Waller and Tyre were likewise suffering from severe and painful wounds received in action at Cabul, which totally disabled them from active service

cumstances, a walk across a drawing-room would have been an exertion; yet these helpless women, with their young families, had already been obliged to rough it on the backs of camels, and on the tops of the baggage yaboos: those who had a horse to ride, or were capable of sitting on one, were considered fortunate indeed. Most had been without shelter since quitting the cantonment — their servants had nearly all deserted or been killed — and, with the exception of Lady Macnaghten and Mrs. Trevor, they had lost all their baggage, having nothing in the world left but the clothes on their backs; *those*, in the case of some of the invalids, consisted of *night dresses* in which they had started from Cabul in their litters. Under such circumstances a few more hours would probably have seen some of them stiffening corpses. The offer of Mahomed Akber was consequently their only chance of preservation. The husbands, better clothed and hardy, would have infinitely preferred taking their chance with the troops; but where is the man who would prefer his own safety, when he thought he could by his presence assist and console those near and dear to him?

It is not therefore wonderful that, from persons so circumstanced, the General's proposal should have met with little opposition, although it was a

matter of serious doubt whether the whole were not rushing into the very jaws of death, by placing themselves at the mercy of a man who had so lately imbrued his hands in the blood of a British Envoy, whom he had lured to destruction by similar professions of peace and good-will.

But whatever may have been the secret intent of Akber's heart, he was at this time our professed friend and ally, having undertaken to escort the whole force to Jellalabad in safety. Whatever suspicions, therefore, have been entertained of his hypocrisy, it was not in the character of an *enemy* that he gained possession of the married families; on the contrary, he stood pledged for their safe escort to Jellalabad, no less than for that of the army to which they belonged; and by their unwarrantable detention as prisoners, no less than by the treacherous massacre of the force, he broke the universal law of nations, and was guilty of an unpardonable breach of faith. Shortly after the departure of the married families, it was discovered that the troopers of the Shah's irregular cavalry and of the mission escort were deserting in great numbers, having been enticed away, as was supposed, by Mahomed Akber, to whom a message of remonstrance was in consequence sent. He assured the General, in reply, that not only would he refrain from enticing the men away, but

that every future deserter from our camp should be shot.

Meanwhile a large body of Affghan horse had been observed in the vicinity of camp, in company with the cavalry deserters; and, fears being entertained that it was their design to attack the camp, a general parade of the troops was ordered for the purpose of repelling them. The 44th foot at this time was found to muster 100 files, and the native infantry regiments, on an average, about 60 files each. Of the Irregular Horse not above 100 effective troopers remained, and the 5th Light Cavalry, though more faithful to their salt, had been reduced by casualties to about 70 fighting men. On the arrival of Mahomed Akber's answer to the General's message, the opportunity was taken of the troops being paraded, to explain to them its purport, and to warn them that every man, who might be discovered deserting, would be shot. At this very time, a Chuprassie of the mission, being caught in the act, was instantly shot, as an example to the rest, by order of the General, and the crime thus received a salutary check. Capt. Mackay, having been chosen to convey to Gen. Sale a fresh order for the evacuation of Jellalabad, was sent over in the evening to the Sirdar with that view. The promises of Mahomed Akber to provide food and fuel were

unfulfilled, and another night of starvation and cold consigned more victims to a miserable death.

January 10th — At break of day all was again confusion, the troops and camp followers crowding promiscuously to the front, so soon as the orders for a march were given, every one dreading, above all things, to be left in the rear. The European soldiers were now almost the only efficient men left, the Hindoostanees having all suffered more or less from the effects of frost in their hands and feet, few were able even to hold a musket, much less to pull a trigger, in fact, the prolonged delay in the snow had paralysed the mental and bodily powers of the strongest men, rendering them incapable of any useful exertion. Hope seemed to have died in every breast. The wildness of terror was exhibited in every countenance.

The advanced guard (consisting of H. M.'s 4th foot, the sole remaining horse-artillery gun, and about fifty troopers of the 5th cavalry) having managed, with much difficulty, to push their way to the front, proceeded a couple of miles without molestation, as far as a narrow gorge between the precipitous spurs of two hills, through which flowed a small stream. Towards this point numbers of Affghan foot had been observed hurrying, with the evident intention of opposing the passage

of the troops, and were now found to occupy the height on the right in considerable force. No sooner did the advance approach within shot, than the enemy, securely perched on their post of vantage, commenced the attack, pouring a destructive fire upon the crowded column, as it slowly drew nigh to the fatal spot. Fresh numbers fell at every volley, and the gorge was soon choked with the dead and dying: the unfortunate Sepoys, seeing no means of escape, and driven to utter desperation, cast away their arms and accoutrements, which only clogged their movements without contributing to their defence, and along with the camp-followers fled for their lives. The Affghans now rushed down upon their helpless and unresisting victims sword in hand, and a general massacre took place. The last small remnant of the Native Infantry regiments were here scattered and destroyed; and the public treasure, with all the remaining baggage, fell into the hands of the enemy. Meanwhile, the advance, after pushing through the Tungee with great loss, had reached Kubbur-i-Jubbar, about five miles ahead, without more opposition. Here they halted to enable the rear to join, but from the few stragglers who from time to time came up, the astounding truth was brought to light, that, of all who had that morning marched from Khoord-Cabul, they were

almost the sole survivors, nearly the whole of the main and rear columns having been cut off and destroyed. About 50 horse artillerymen, with one twelve-pounder howitzer, 70 files H.M.'s 4th, and 150 cavalry troopers, now composed the whole Cabul force; but, notwithstanding the slaughter and dispersion that had taken place, the camp-followers still formed a considerable body.

The approach of a party of Affghan horse induced the General to draw up his little force in line, preparatory to an expected attack; but on its being ascertained to be Mahomed Akber Khan and his followers, Captain Skinner was despatched to remonstrate with him on the attack on our troops, after a treaty had been entered into, and their safety guaranteed.

In reply, he expressed his regret at what had occurred, but said that, notwithstanding all his endeavours, he found it impossible to restrain the Giljyes, who were in such a state of excitement as to be beyond the control even of their own chiefs. As a last resource, he recommended that the few remaining troops should lay down their arms, and place themselves entirely under his safeguard, in which case he could ensure their safe escort to Jellalabad; but that as the camp-followers still amounted to some thousands, and far outnumbered his own people, there was no